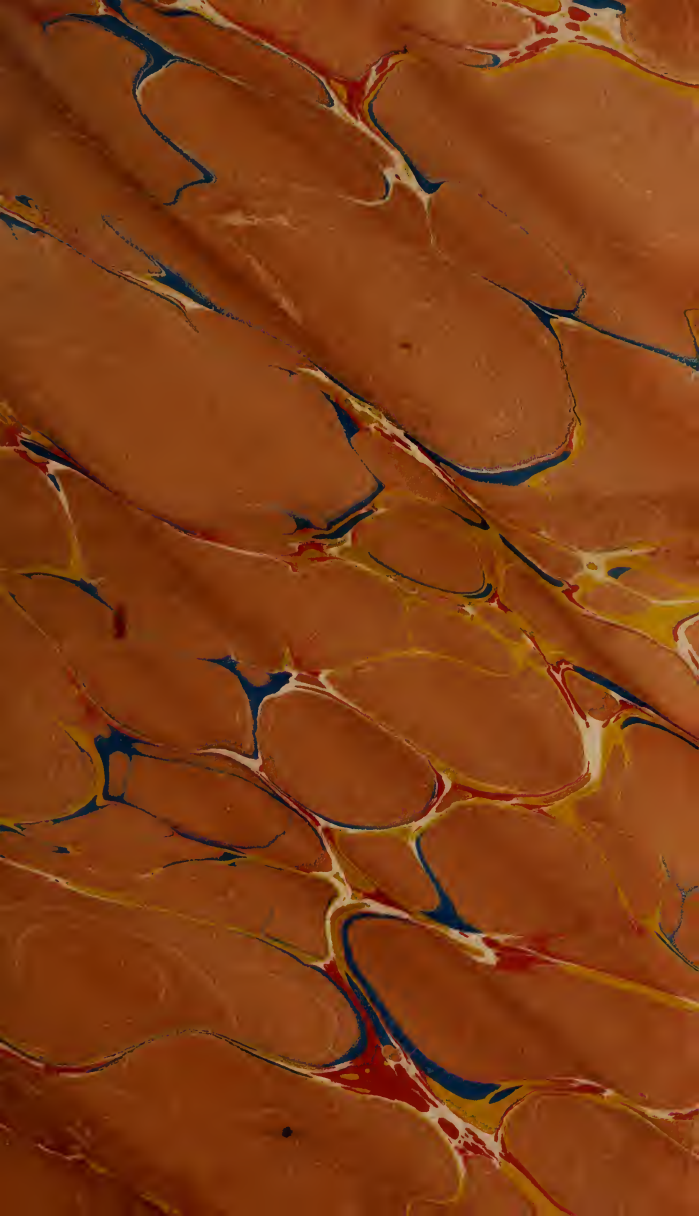


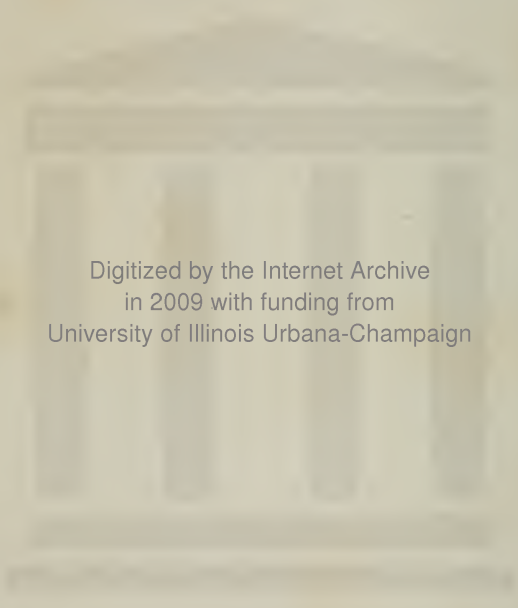


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HUSBAND HUNTING;

OR, THE

MOTHER AND DAUGHTERS.

A TALE OF FASHIONABLE LIFE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR G. B. WHITTAKER,

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THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

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HUSBAND HUNTING;

OR,

THE MOTHER AND DAUGHTERS.

CHAPTER I.

See his brave fleet,

With silken streamers the young Phœbus fanning

Play upon your fancies; and in them behold,

Upon the hempen tackle ship-boys climbing:

Hear the shrill whistle, which doth order give

To sounds confused; behold the threaden sails

Borne with the invisible and creeping winds

Draw the huge bottoms through the furrowed sea,

Breasting the lofty surge.

Shakspeare.

THE day of embarkation, but for the mingled and painful feelings with which all were preparing to depart, would have been one of intense interest to Vaughan, who had never before witnessed a similar scene. The unclouded rays of a

meridian sun sparkling on the white foam of the waves as they dashed on the shore with a monotonous but yet not unpleasing sound; the concourse of spectators, some attracted by idle curiosity alone, others too much occupied with their own griefs to take any notice of the multitude by whom they were surrounded; hands extended, and handkerchiefs waving, gentle and half-uttered farewells drowned by loud shouts and seamen's boisterous voices,—the proud vessels rushing along,—the anxiety of the friends of the soldiers that nothing should be forgotten for the comfort of those who so soon might need only a mound of earth to cover them; all presented a new and not unwelcome subject of contemplation to Vaughan. Yet the common but natural reflection, how few were destined to return, how many

of those left behind had taken] their last look, sank into his mind, and a circumstance of the moment renewed but too strongly his own regrets.

There was one officer, a lieutenant in Vaughan's regiment, for whom he felt deeply moved. His young wife had accompanied him even to the shore. Their only child was in its father's arms. The child, fascinated by the scene, was all delight. The beating of the drums, the scarlet of the soldiers, the epaulettes, the swords, the plumed caps, the flags streaming from the masts of the vessels, were all so many objects of wonder to the child's eye. He clapped his little hands with transport; but when the final moment came, and the father was about to resign him,—when the boy found that he was to be borne away, he clung round his

neck with a shriek as heart-rending as the agony of a deeper sorrow. There is something in the innocent anguish of an infant that wrings the soul. The weeping mother took it struggling from the father's arms, but still lingered on the shore. A tear started to the soldier's eye; the most indifferent of the spectators gazed on the scene with an air of painful interest; there was even a momentary silence.—“ This parting should have taken place at home, Sir,” said the colonel of the regiment; “ these things are unwise, and not for the public eye. A soldier should suffer in secret.” The young lieutenant made no reply. He might perhaps have said, with Macduff, “ He has no children;” but he contented himself with casting a last look of tender regret upon his wife and child, and a somewhat reproachful glance at his

colonel; then putting his foot firmly on the deck of the vessel, he folded his arms, and walked apart from the group. In a few minutes after the vessel was under weigh.

The passengers consisted chiefly of officers and soldiers sent to the assistance of the Spanish patriots. It was the commencement of the memorable year 1812, the time when all Europe, agitated by the struggles of Spain, looked to the issue of the contest with a mixture of hope and fear.

The conversation soon became mixed and animated. Soldiers are a light-hearted and thoughtless race; painful recollections or dark anticipations seldom interfere to check their mirth. The present is all that they can reckon upon, and the present they are fully disposed to enjoy. They talked over the Spanish

cause, its laurels, its prize-money, its promotion. Vaughan witnessed their careless hilarity with surprise. "You are a young soldier," said one of them, advancing and disturbing his reverie by a friendly tap on the shoulder; "you are new to these matters,—your thoughts are with England and English friends; but come, rouse yourself, and be one of us. Should you have the luck to return, a second parting will have lost half its regrets; and, if not, why then, you know, neither head nor heart will ever ache again. That is my way of reasoning."

Roused by the appeal, he endeavoured to shake off the weight which oppressed him, and take a more lively interest in the revelries round him.

There was one yet more abstracted than himself, who trod the deck with a

slow step, and by whom the mirth and mingled voices of the various groupes seemed either unheard or unheeded; but he was not an Englishman, who, while encountering danger himself, was yet cheered with the consciousness that, should he return, it would not be to find his own hearth desolate,—the home of his infancy plundered or destroyed by the hand of the invader. He was a native of that unhappy country whose sufferings now formed the theme of every tongue. His eye had lost nothing of its fire, but a shade of melancholy and deep thought had softened the strong and originally harsh lineaments of his countenance.

By his side stood a young female, dressed in the costume of her country, closely veiled, and apparently as much the prey of reflection as himself. They

spoke but seldom,—and the few words which they addressed to each other, uttered in their native tongue, were unintelligible to Vaughan's ear; but their residence in England had given them the advantage over him. He soon ascertained that they could speak English with tolerable ease, and on this discovery he addressed some slight and unimportant questions as an opening to intercourse.

The Spaniard at first repelled these advances with a frigid politeness not very favourable to further acquaintance; but soon perceiving that the questions were not dictated by mere curiosity, and naturally touched by the expression of intelligence and sympathy in the inquirer's countenance, he gradually became more communicative.

He was, he hinted, of rank and dis-

tion in his own country. He had seen the mansion of his forefathers razed to the ground by the hands of the enemy. He had fled to England for shelter, not for his own, but for his sister's sake, in the hope that the storm might blow over, and they might yet return in safety. But the hope was vain; he could no longer remain to listen to details which froze his blood, and felt himself compelled by feeling and honour to return and join in the retribution of his country. He was not bred to the profession of arms, but he was born a Spaniard; a soldier by inclination, a patriot from his birth, he felt it to be every man's duty, at such a crisis, to lend the assistance of his arm.

“ But the lady,” said Vaughan, with a look of commiseration towards the slender form that hung helplessly on his arm,

yet listened with breathless interest to every word that fell from her brother's lips.

“ My sister,” said the Spaniard, proudly, “ will not want a defender while there is one Spaniard left in our unhappy land. She feels as she ought to do, and knows no fear; Spanish women do not disturb or unman the hearts of their friends by idle lamentation; they incite them to deeds of honour, they talk to them of conquest, they hand them the sword and the musket. My sister has the spirit of her country, and would prefer braving even death to longer exile; she has even made a vow before the altar never to give her hand but to one who has fought for Spain. Is it not true, Leonora?”

“ It is true,” said Leonora, slightly blushing, and half raising her veil, she

discovered a countenance of singular and animated beauty. "It is true," she repeated; but that vow was uttered in secret." A glance from her brother caused the veil to be instantly lowered.

Little farther communication passed between them during the remainder of the voyage, which the serenity of the weather protracted somewhat more than usual; the Spaniards chiefly remaining below; Vaughan indulging himself by inhaling the soft but partial breezes which gently agitated the ocean, or contemplating the various changes of sea and sky, the morning splendours, and the midnight heavens, studded with innumerable stars, multiplied in the clear expanse of waters.

But when the vessel, early on a lovely morning, at length cast anchor in the harbour of Lisbon, a mutual feeling of

admiration and delight brought them again in contact. All with one spirit rushed eagerly on deck to catch the first glimpse of the city, then seen in all its magnificence, and claiming the homage of every eye.

The hand of the spoiler had not yet visited this splendid city; the shrubs and aromatic plants produced by her genial climate still decorated the balconies of the children of luxury; the lower classes still pursued their busy and active employments; the streets were thronged with passengers of all ranks, dressed in their showy and picturesque costumes; numerous boats plying near the shore surrounded the vessels; a few beggars, stretched along the banks, extending their hands to the strangers, alone interrupted the harmony of the view,—but even these were enjoying

the luxury of the summer sun and the gaiety around them.

Vaughan, enchanted with the prospect, almost forgot the cause for which he was landing on those rich shores,—or, at least, all the revolting images connected with that cause, war, and famine, and pestilence. To defend such a country from insult and invasion appeared a duty equally pleasing as imperious, a feeling the natural offspring of the enthusiasm of the moment.

“ Oh, Spain! oh, my country!” said Leonora, springing with the elasticity of youth to the very edge of the vessel, “ why did I quit you?” She forgot that it was even for life she fled, and that the moment of security was not yet come. She saw only the smiling land before her,—she breathed only the perfume of

her own delicious groves,—her cheek was fanned by the air she loved.

The chief part of Vaughan's comrades had served in previous campaigns, and to them the scene had lost the charm of novelty,—but his unchecked language roused the Spaniard from a long and moody silence, and he turned round to express, in a more courteous accent than usual, how much his national pride had been gratified by witnessing it. “But Spain is a finer country still,” he observed; “and you must not exhaust all your admiration upon Lisbon. I should be happy to explore it with you, but that I leave the city early to-morrow, for the distant spot which I once called my own,—waste and ruin as it is, I shall not be happy till I am there once more. Englishman,” he said, taking his hand, and

leading him away, “you have interested me,—but the fate of war may forbid that I shall ever meet you again. That poor girl,” (pointing to his sister) “she is happy just now. It is a happiness unlikely to last,—but I would not distress her by forebodings. Chance, at some future period, may throw her in your way alone and unprotected. Should you meet her at any time in danger or distress, will you defend or console her as your own honourable heart may dictate. You will remember this face.”—He approached her, and with his own hand the proud Spaniard raised Leonora’s veil.

CHAPTER II.

He saw a sight of beauty, warlike towers,
Pale convent roofs, o'er-topping kingly bowers,
Hills crowning hills, on which the moonlight lay,
In solemn brightness, but a milder day.

Phineas Webb.

FOR some time after his landing, Vaughan enjoyed only the amusements of soldier-ship. His joining the regiment as a volunteer had been no impediment to the friendly and generous intercourse of his comrades; a commission which followed him out, and which he received with the higher gratification as it was procured by Gordon's interest, and sent with a letter from Julia, as her "present to her gallant cousin," soon removed any feeling of inferiority; and all

around him was made for the excitement and indulgence of his active and vivid sensibility.

Lisbon has long become familiar to the British traveller ; but, at that moment, it was seen, as it will perhaps never be seen again. The war had filled the capital with an influx of the opulent and various population of the provinces ; the contrast of colours, features, and costumes ; the bold and vigorous countenance of the natives of the Tralos Montes, contrasted with the rich olive hue and delicate features of the Creole from the South American possessions of Portugal, and those again placed beside the bronzed skin, the fiery eye, and the haughty brow of the descendant of the old Moorish blood that had once lorded it over the land ; the infinite mingling of dresses native and foreign, the turbans and caps,

and purple shawls, and embroidered mantles; the monkish habits mingled with the uniforms of the Portuguese and British soldiery; all formed a moving picture of incessant liveliness, variety, and captivation.

To a stranger, the churches, in all countries of the Continent, are among the first objects of curiosity, as they are among the most accessible. Vaughan often strayed into those lofty and magnificent temples, and, under the influence of twilight, made deeper and more lovely by the hues streaming through windows covered with the heraldry of kings and the forms of saints, in all the glorious colourings of sky and gem; listened to the service chaunted by the monks in some distant chapel.

At other times, on coming from the theatre or the ball-room, he has taken one of the boats that ply constantly on

the Tagus, and fallen down the river to enjoy the delicious night of the south ; and with his solitary boatman wandered away, listening to the sounds of festivity as they decayed along the shore ; or caught by some sweet voice singing to the harp in one of the verandas that so often lie open to the breeze from the vineyards of the Alentejo ; or, as all sank in the distance, lying on his oars to gaze upon the city in the moonlight, almost realizing the vision of an oriental tale, the immense piles of noble building, rising crescent over crescent from the curve of the shore, a host of marble palaces, convents, and public edifices, lifting their white fronts and embattled roofs and gilded spires to the summit of the hill ; while the moon, in the full and powerful splendour of the southern sky, covered this mighty theatre, to which the

Colosseum were but a toy, with a flood of silver.

At other times, on some of the delicious evenings of the season, he would mount his horse, and ride away from the tumult and confusion of the city, to indulge himself with the spectacle of the groups of peasants mingling in the national dance with all the spirit and gaiety of their country.

War had not yet extended its ravages to the spot which they had inhabited from their birth; and, till actually compelled to seek safety by flight, they did not suffer gloomy anticipations to interfere with their little fêtes, those smiling holidays endeared to them by custom, and which climate and inclination alike fitted them to enjoy.

The peasants of both Spain and Portugal seem musical by nature. From

the humblest and most unpromising roof, the sounds of the guitar, the mandolin, or the castanets, often attract the ear of the stranger ; and those innocent recreations relieve them from having recourse to the idle and worthless occupations with which other lands contrive to dissipate their hours of leisure. Their movements in the dance, though untaught and unstudied, are yet striking, and not without grace ; and their very dress, so well calculated to display their attitudes and figures, adds greatly to the picturesque of the whole.

Sometimes, tempted by the fineness of the day, he urged his rambles to a length that surprised himself ; but the infinite variety of objects prevented the way from appearing tedious ; or if at any time he was wearied, the door of the cottage was always open to invite him to enter,

and partake of the peasant's fare ; or did he arrive at a spot where those hospitable dwellings became more thinly scattered, he was secure of finding the luxury of a vineyard to invite him to refreshment and repose.

Sometimes his thoughts or his dreams wandered to England ; but it was to wish that the Continent was alike free to all ; and that it was in his power to transport those whom he most loved and valued far away from the moody atmosphere of their own skies to that land of sunshine and flowers, which had already begun to spread its invigorating influence over his own frame.

Continual exercise under a genial sky can scarcely fail to produce an inspiring effect upon the health and spirits. Vaughan's heart, buoyant with life, soon resisted all temptations to be sad,

though his situation was far from one of unmixed happiness, or brilliant prospect. If there was any thing that he sighed for at that moment, it was to be engaged in more active service. He could hardly hope for promotion while stretched at his ease in the shelter of some overhanging wood or glowing orange grove, or wandering a spectator through the streets of a festive city.

The narrowness of his circumstances, too, pressed upon his feelings; but there were luxuries and amusements open to him in the aspect of nature, and of those he largely partook. No where is the aristocracy of rank so rigidly preserved as in the army. He was sometimes disconcerted to perceive a coxcomb, whose manners and narrow ideas betrayed his mind, and whom money alone had evidently raised, claiming deference as his

superior officer; but he felt that those might be but temporary vexations. It is the happy nature of youth to rise superior to circumstances; and he contemplated the time as not distant, when no man could have the paltry privilege of looking down upon his place in society. On his uncle's promises he placed the firmest reliance. He knew him to be, though stern, honourable; warm in his affections, though harsh in his manners; and though perhaps easy to offend, yet not implacable. He burned to hear the trumpet; the order to march would have been the most welcome sound to his ear; the sight of the enemy's camp the most pleasing spectacle that could have met his eye. He longed for an opportunity of distinguishing himself. The time was even nearer than he had anticipated.

He had written to England, as soon as

he found that his regiment was likely to be detained at least some weeks, in the hope of obtaining speedy intelligence from home. He had received but one letter, containing little besides the assurance of the health of his friends; and was anxiously awaiting a second, when a small packet was put into his hands from his uncle.

But if his surprise at recognising the hand-writing was great, it was much increased by an examination of the contents. In a word, it contained a second order for the immediate purchase of a lieutenancy. His measure of delight was full. His first thought was, that his uncle had become acquainted with the whole transaction; and that a just resentment towards Philip had prompted this kindness towards himself. But on a more minute perusal of the letter, he could

trace no allusion to any such discovery. His uncle expressed himself pleased that no whining and boyish methods had been employed by him to regain his favour; that having once confessed his error, he had prepared himself to suffer its consequences, with a fortitude and spirit honourable to his character; and that he had shown firmness enough to adhere to the resolution he had adopted, with the true and proper feeling of an independent mind.

It was evident that the old man had satisfied his sense of justice by inflicting a temporary punishment, as an evidence of his displeasure, but that his heart had pleaded for him in secret. Vaughan's heart bounded; his sanguine anticipations appeared realized. In the eye of youth, how bright a picture is sometimes painted by the pencil of

Hope. What might he not expect from the man whose strong affection had borne down every barrier, had overleaped the narrow and deep-rooted prejudices which had been the spring of his actions for so many years, had given such an air of asperity to his manners, and completely concealed from the world the workings of his heart. And this was the man whom the world had so long branded as a selfish misanthrope, whom neither the sufferings of the many, nor the gratitude of the few, could stimulate to liberality.

He doubted not from this moment that all his difficulties were at an end; he saw himself at once the child of fortune—the heir of his uncle—the hope and comfort of his parent—the husband of Catherine! Elated with the sketch which his imagination had drawn, he wrote, on

the spur of the moment, such a reply as a full and grateful heart could alone dictate; he vowed to accept the gift only as a stimulus to exertion; and ventured to predict, with ardent sincerity, that the moment was fast approaching which would prove him worthy of a reward so generously bestowed.

CHAPTER III.

The birds chaunt melody on every bush,
The snake lies rolled in the cheerful sun,
The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind,
And make a chequered shadow on the ground.
Under their sweet shade, comrades, let us sit ;
While martial sounds, and sweet melodious birds,
Be unto us as is a nurse's song.

Shakspeare.

RELIEVED from the dejection which had cast a shade over every scene, Vaughan began to look around with renewed interest, and he found as much amusement in studying the character of the people, as the curiosities of the country. His hours of solitude he devoted to the language; a task which daily intercourse with the inhabitants rendered comparatively light. He was fond of

ascertaining from his own experience the popular feeling, and was cheered by perceiving the same spirit in all ranks, an undeviating resolution to defend the country to the last breath.

Sometimes, in company with his brother officers, he lounged away an evening at the grates of the various convents; but this was a less welcome subject of contemplation. It was painful to him to see what minds were here destroyed by seclusion from the world.

Some of the sisters had intelligent and expressive countenances even in an advanced age. These walls had enclosed some of the chief beauties of Lisbon. He regretted to witness the cold indifference which had crept over their minds with regard to the affairs of life. They listened with childish apathy to the details of their country's sufferings.

The calamities of which they heard, had not reached their narrow cells; their occupations, if such they could be called, were pursued with the same monotony which had marked their course for years. Of distance, never having exceeded their own narrow bounds, they could scarcely form an idea; and a messenger was hardly ever despatched on an errand from the convent, that, let the distance be what it might, they did not murmur at his delay.

Who can be led to imagine, that the fittest preparation for a better world is to take no interest in the concerns of this? To fly from a life which was destined to exercise and purify the heart, is at best but an unworthy refuge from trial. Some of those unfortunate beings had indeed been sacrificed to the tyranny or ambition of their parents; but many

more were the victims of a blind and mistaken zeal; and some few had, through early disappointment, voluntarily retired from the world. Books, the natural resource of solitude, with the exception of those on religious subjects, appeared seldom sought as a recreation among those whose amusements must necessarily be so limited.

Vaughan having ventured to express his surprise on the subject, and to point out how many hidden stores of intellectual pleasure were yet open to their perusal, one of them, with a deep sigh, alleged a somewhat natural reason in excuse, which perhaps echoed the sentiments of half the community. "Of what avails it," said the fair nun, "to read of scenes in which we must never mingle; of events in which we can have no share; of pleasures that we are forbidden to

know ; of places and people that it can never be our fortune to see ? It would serve only to heighten an unavailing regret, and bring those thoughts back to earth, which we have vowed to devote to heaven. Yet I do read sometimes," she said, with a sigh ; " here is one book," and she drew out a small volume, " which I have read again and again. I will lend it to you, Signor, and you shall tell me whether it speaks truth. But," and she seemed somewhat to repent her promise, as Vaughan stretched out his hand for the book, " you must promise to me by the Holy Virgin, that you will return it by the same hour to-morrow, for it has been my companion for many a tedious day, and I will not lose it but with life."—" I will swear to you," said Vaughan, smiling, " by the honour of a soldier, and

that is one on which you ought to rely.” —“ I know not,” said the Portuguese, raising her hand, by a sudden movement, to her marble forehead, and starting back with a look of deep agitation, “ that is one which I mistrust strangely ; but no matter, be it so ; I will confide in you :” and crossing her hands devoutly on her breast, while a tear found its way even to her slender fingers, she retired.

“ Poor thing,” said an old nun, who yet lingered at the grating, and had not quite forgotten the feelings of her early years, “ poor thing, who that knows her little history, can wonder at the doubt she expressed. That book was given to her by a young officer of your country, and it has filled her head with dreams of romance of which she never thought before. He lingered many an hour about this grate, and made fine

speeches and sonnets on her beauty, of which she was never conscious till then. His regiment was ordered suddenly away; yet he left her with a light heart and a laughing eye, vowing that she should see or hear of him at no very distant day, which day has never come: and my mind misgives me strangely but he is one of those who will tell the same tale to every handsome damsel that crosses his path, and think no more of Sister Clara; though she has not yet finished her noviciate, and might leave the convent to-morrow. Of a certainty, Signor, he is either dead or false-hearted; and, be it which it may, 'tis the same to her, for her heart is breaking."

Vaughan, moved by the recital, gave the remainder of the evening to a perusal of the little book which had been thus placed in his hands. It was a tale

all of love; it told of vows broken, conventional vows disregarded, of convent walls scaled, of faith plighted, and hearts exchanged. "It was unmanly, it was cruel, to raise such images before her eyes, and then leave her to the gloom and the sorrows which were here so faithfully portrayed," thought Vaughan; "and yet, perhaps, this very individual is roving the world at this moment unconscious of the mischief he has wrought, and might be but a sample of the many who tread the earth inflicting cureless wounds."

He related the little story which he had just heard, and was astonished at the laugh which followed his recital. "Ay, ay, we have heard something of this before," said one of his military auditors; "and I think I could even name the man to whom you allude; but you see this

business in too young a light. He, if I mistake not, has made more conquests, or victims, if you will have it, than this nun; but is it a man's fault that he is a showy fellow with a plausible tongue?—and, if the fair ones of Spain and Portugal choose to be sentimental and susceptible, must he wear a mask and be dumb. Ha! ha! ha! However, don't ask his name; we are all sworn to keep the secret, lest some black-browed Spanish brother or bravo should extinguish one of the best-natured fellows in the service." A new burst of laughter followed this speech, and Vaughan broke through the circle.

On that evening an order was received for the first brigade, of which Vaughan's regiment was one, to march on the following morning. While his heart beat with the prospect before him, he did not forget his promise to the

young nun. He had but just time to return the volume which she prized so highly, and to console her by venturing to hope that chance might throw its giver in his way, in which case he should not fail to remind him of the Convent of the Estrella. Clara thanked him with a blush of gratitude ; but, as she waved her hand at parting, her tears betrayed that hope was gone.

Next morn, at day-break, his first glance was towards the convent walls, —and in an hour after he was on his way to Spain. The bustle of departure, the confusion of sounds around him, the animation which lighted every countenance, produced a restorative effect upon his spirits. Soldiers have too little leisure for reflection, to be long the prey of painful thoughts ; and Vaughan, in common with his comrades, surveyed the prospect before him

with a buoyant and joyous feeling. For the first day or two, as they sailed in proud tranquillity along the Tagus, he could scarcely persuade himself that the land which they were approaching was the very dwelling of war and suffering. It looked more like the land of peace and plenty, dispensing to the stranger its superfluous luxuries.

But as they disembarked, and approached the seat of conflict, the traces of devastation became more visible. Here cottages were abandoned by the terrified inhabitants, and stripped even of their scanty furniture,—groups of peasants, with their families, were making as precipitate a retreat as the strength of the fugitives would permit,—and at one beautiful spot, where the vintage had partially commenced, baskets of clustering grapes were seen abandoned in

the hurry of flight, and the labours of the husbandman left exposed to the grasp of the soldier.

At the close of a long march, their attention was one night attracted by a blaze of light, which seemed to illuminate the whole forest around. They rushed with one consent to the spot. Groups of the peasantry were assembled in a confused mass near the site of a vast conflagration. Their various habits, rendered more distinct in the hideous glare, showed them to have assembled from various provinces, but one spirit appeared to animate the whole.

They were shouting round the burning ruin with a sort of wild exultation, which the spectators for a few moments felt at loss to comprehend. Could they be rejoicing in the calamities of their country? Were they rebels? "What,"

cried the officers, advancing amid this strange multitude, while fragments of the blazing timber fell every moment with a tremendous crash, "have the enemy been already here? Is this their work?" "No enemy," cried a crowd of fierce voices,—“no enemy is like the man who has turned traitor to his country. This was the castle of one of our counts, one of our chief lords. Some of us here were his vassals; he has deserted us, and gone over to the French. This work is ours, the work of our revenge. Should he ever return, he shall find that his country will contain no castle for him. No child of his race shall ever tread within these walls. So perish his memory!” And with a reiterated shout they again rushed forward, and danced round the burning pile.

The brigade halted in a plain not far

from the scene of tumult, and their encampment was lighted through the night by the blaze. In the morning all was tranquil. The peasants had dispersed to their various habitations, leaving behind them no other traces of their labour of destruction than a huge and blackened heap of ruins.

A glorious sun shone on the morning's march; gallant anticipation beguiled the journey; and the bands of the different regiments striking up on their approach to the towns and villages, summoned all the inhabitants to their windows, who greeted them with loud acclamations as they passed, and made many a heart beat with that wild exultation which no man but a soldier can fully comprehend.

At one little town, at which they halted for refreshment, less pleasurable

sensations awaited them. The hospital for the troops were stationed here, and the waggons of the wounded in a late engagement, were just then entering in dreary procession. The slow and melancholy motion to which they were obliged by the pain of the sufferers, the hollow and dejected countenances of the invalids, the soiled and disordered uniforms, formed a striking and painful contrast to the quick march, ruddy and healthful countenances, loud voices, and military array, of the advancing troops.

But in an instant every tongue was checked into silence, the offspring of respect and feeling, for their unfortunate fellow soldiers. Vaughan averted his eyes from a spectacle which, for the time, unmanned him. A transient damp was cast upon the spirits of all ; and yet, thought he, what is this but a faithful,

though hurried, picture of human life,—pain and pleasure in rapid succession, one almost always the forerunner of the other. In the wan and altered countenances that passed him, he fancied that he could recognise some familiar faces,—some whom he had seen in the circle of the light of heart; some whom he had laughed at as coxcombs, or shunned as dangerous companions. What were they now?

Soldiership may be the source of errors, but it has its counteracting lessons; and many a feebler appeal to the heart and understanding has been made by the philosopher, nay, even by the preacher, than was given in the slow procession that then wound away before his eye.

CHAPTER IV.

Oh ! the tender ties
Close twisted with the fibres of the heart !
Which broken, break them ; and drain off the soul
Of human joy, and make it pain to live.

Young.

ONE morning, as he was wandering through the streets of a small town, where his regiment was quartered, he thought he saw an officer riding by, (though the last person he should have expected to see there,) his old college friend, George Mordaunt. He turned round eagerly to ascertain the truth of his conjecture. Mordaunt, for it was indeed he, stopped at that moment, and removed his doubts by a cordial shake of the hand. “ You seem surprised !

Is my appearance here so very unaccountable at such a time?"—"I am indeed surprised," returned Vaughan; "your resolution must have been very suddenly taken."—"True, but do you think that no one is to be seized with the military mania but yourself. I had indeed some fair objects at home, wherewith to make a man contented in England; but man is restless by nature, and I don't pretend to be exempt from the universal failing. But come to my quarters, where I am handsomely accommodated for the present; and we'll talk over this and other matters. You will guess," pursued Mordaunt, "that I met with some opposition. Fathers will frown, and mothers weep. I had an estate, indeed, that might have been worth looking after; but I have made up my mind that I shall return all in

good time,—if not, I have a younger brother willing enough to keep up the honours of the family, and if I should chance to get knocked on the head, he will have you to thank for his promotion.”

“Me!” said Vaughan, in surprise. “Yes, you,” returned Mordaunt, laughing; “did you not talk over your projects eternally, and did not I listen, not till I was weary, but till you set me mad to follow your example. Who was to stay lounging at home when half the world was up in arms, and for Spain too?” —“Right, Mordaunt,” said Vaughan; “it is a fine country and a fine people; the French must not get possession of it.” “Right,” interrupted Mordaunt; “and was it possible to sit down quietly a mere country squire, hunting and shooting for the rest of one’s days, when one might be so much the better

employed running down foreign game. But here, we are arrived at my billet; am I not superbly lodged?" throwing open the door of a large apartment, fitted up with unusual elegance. "But a week ago my couch was spread in the open air; and a few drenching showers, which had no respect of persons, made me once or twice think of old England. My host is a genuine Don of the first feather,—and, by the taste displayed before you, you may easily perceive that a female hand has had its share in the arrangements. He has a wife and two exquisite daughters, who sing like sirens, and of whom I catch a glimpse every morning as they go to mass. I and a few of us are always welcome at the Spaniard's table, and the Donna has now and then a delightful Tertullia, of which I never omit one."

"And all this will end, I suppose,

by your leaving your heart with one or all of your fair hostesses," said Vaughan, laughing. "That may happen, too," replied his friend, "though I have not yet quite determined which. And here is a mandolin belonging to one of them, which I took occasion to borrow in the hope that she might be tempted to come and look for it. I have become quite sublime on the instrument, and might set up for a wandering minstrel, should other resources fail. But now for your history; have you nothing to relate, private or public, since your arrival in this land of adventure? Have you come thus far untouched, escaped all wounds, outward and inward?"

Vaughan confined his communication to the general circumstances relative to himself; yet, in speaking of Lisbon, he accidentally touched on the interest

which he took in the fate of the young nun. It was still sufficiently fresh in his memory for him to have lost none of his indignation on the subject. "And now what do you think," said Vaughan, "such a fellow deserves? He has, of course, deserted this unfortunate girl." "Very possibly," said Mordaunt; I am no judge of those matters; but this I will say, that, whatever his deserts may be, you, at least, don't seem inclined to spare him,—and, were you a priest, I certainly should not advise him to apply to you for absolution." "You treat the business lightly," said Vaughan; "but no man of conscience or honour could acquit himself under such circumstances?" "Hey, why do you fix your eyes upon me? What have I to do with it?"—"I don't know,—I have no right," interrupted Vaughan, a suspicion just then

flashing across his mind; "but you seem irritated." "Come, come, you are not my confessor," said Mordaunt, holding out his hand; "there's no resisting your cross-examination. In short, you see the hero of the romance before you. But I believe I tell you nothing new, for I shrewdly suspect it was a piece of Clara's own intelligence."

Vaughan disclaimed the suspicion with a sincerity that his friend found it impossible to doubt. "Well, well, I never quarrel about a matter of opinion; I am prepared to listen to a string of reproaches. Here I sit,—and now say what you will," throwing himself with an air of affected submission upon a couch at the end of the room. "No," said Vaughan, "I have none to make. I have told my tale; it is true and simple, and requires no comment. You

are a man of feeling and honour."

"My dear fellow, you are not fit for this world," said Mordaunt, trying to rally; "you are too romantic for me. You see a pale girl at a convent-grating, and listen to a crazy old nun, who would take advantage of your credulity, to persuade you that we are all a set of barbarians scarcely worth powder and ball."

"No, I took the liberty to judge for myself; and, if there is truth in the world, that girl loves you with a sincerity not to be questioned."

"It may be so," said Mordaunt gravely; "but I acquit myself of all design upon her heart; nor had I till this moment any suspicion that I possessed it. It was not likely that my taste should take so serious a turn, considering the innumerable obstacles between us."

"Obstacles? I see none but such as

might be easily overcome where the happiness, the life of a generous woman was at stake." "I could name a thousand," interrupted Mordaunt. "In the first place, I have no thoughts of shackling myself thus early, nor can she have had any thoughts of matrimony; has she not voluntarily devoted herself to a conventional life?"

"Recollect," said his friend, with strong emphasis, "her youth and inexperience. Till she saw you, she might have resigned the world without reluctance. Her heart had as yet been unawakened. It was you who first taught her to feel, and, permit me to add, to suffer."

"Confound it," said Mordaunt, impatiently rising, "my regiment was ordered off; could I command it to stay? An intercourse of this nature

must necessarily be short-lived. Such things were not intended to last for ever."

"No, but they were precisely such as might be remembered for ever."

There was a transient pause. Mordaunt paced the room evidently disconcerted, and Vaughan was silent. At length, approaching the door, he said, "Mordaunt, I must leave you; I have intruded upon you too long. I have undertaken a hopeless cause; and this unhappy girl must be hurried to her grave." "The grave! no," said Mordaunt, starting, "I am not so culpable. I have not the vanity to think myself capable of leaving an impression on any woman's feelings."

"No, but you had the vanity to endeavour to make it; and believe me, Mordaunt, that the affections of an

innocent heart are not things to be lightly prized,—nor is he guiltless who, having sought them, throws them by.”

“ Well, what would you have me do? What can I do?” said Mordaunt, more than half subdued; “ I might have been thoughtless in the first instance; but at present I am not my own master—I cannot desert—duty first, and love afterwards.”

“ No, but your pen is free,” said the persevering Vaughan; “ you can write to her, and prevent her from taking the vows. If you reject my counsel, Mordaunt, the image of that girl, pale and dying under your neglect, will yet come across you, and sadden the best hours of your existence.”

“ You are a philosopher, Vaughan, and should have been a preacher; but you have done more than I could have given

you credit for. In ten minutes you have found Clara a husband, and me a touch of the heart-ach,—both of which an hour ago, in my short-sighted wisdom, appeared two as unlikely events as could possibly happen. But I shall set your heart at ease, and write the fatal letter instantly. We may soon have a stirring day, and I won't answer for the continuance of a good resolution."

CHAPTER V.

“ I saw them plumed for battle, heard their shouts
Making the high heavens ring, to which their spears
Lent a new morn. The mountain's rugged side
Look'd like an Indian tapestry, silver shot,
And vein'd with hues of the rainbow. Banners waved,
And the shrill trumpet's cries from hill to hill
Gave gallant cheering.”

Phineas Webb.

THE stirring day was nearer even than the young soldiers conjectured. In the evening, on their return from a walk, rendered delicious by the cool fragrance of the air from the gardens that covered the country to the foot of the hills, they found the British in the full bustle of preparation. The roads were covered with baggage and cavalry, and the streets of the town were crowded with the troops falling into the line of march, and the

staff riding about, and giving orders. The evening was glorious, the sun, an orb, less of gold than of living fire, broad and burning, sat on the Sierra in a splendour which they had never seen before, and which the troops looked upon as a sign of victory.

As they left the town, the bands struck up, the colours were unfurled, and the air rang with the gallant tumult of the soldiery. The Sierra before them rose rapidly as they approached it, and the brigade gazed on its masses and pinnacles, sheeted with sunlight in a thousand shapes and hues, with a feeling of scarcely less than astonishment. As the sun sank lower, and the bases of the mountain range lost the light, they seemed embedded in a sea of melting purple; but the rivulets that broke down the higher declivities,

still gleaming in the sun, wore the look of streams and gushes of fire winding their way through the bold and fractured sides of the hills, till they were extinguished in the gulf below: higher still, the brow, jagged and pointed in innumerable forms, was the crater of the great volcano, ruddy with shifting and lurid splendour; and, above all, one mighty shaft of granite, white as snow, and in the full blaze of the sun, shot its spire into the clouds, with the intense light of a living volcanic flame.

The troops continued their march during the night, through precipices and pinnacles, by wild depths, where a false step would have been destruction, and on ridges, below which the clouds hung. The moon was in her wane; but her light, in that region of pure air, and under the serene temperature of the

climate, was yet enough to shew their way along this dangerous and diversified tract. But the stars shone out with a blue brilliancy, new to eyes that had till now seen them only from the plain. The old poetic images of lamps and gems of heaven were too feeble for their glory. Their orbs were larger, their brightness broader and more dazzling, their hue of a deeper and more celestial sapphire, than could be imaged by the common similitudes of earth; and Vaughan, as he gazed upon them, thought involuntarily of powers and forms of being beyond the grave, of the immensity of the future, and of those awful and illustrious provinces and kingdoms of space, to which the spirits of the multitude, now grown silent in their sight, might before another day be hastening.

It was midnight, when an officer of the staff rode up to the regiment, telling them to get under arms, and advance immediately towards a point on which the last beam of the moon was falling; that the enemy were near, and that it was necessary to take them by surprise.

The troops started from the ground with martial good will, and in a few moments the brigade began descending the precipices. The march was conducted with caution, but the tread of the soldiery, the guns crashing down the stony road, and the cries of the muleteers, which no threats could restrain, must have soon betrayed their movements to the vigilant and active enemy. But fortune still favoured them; the sky, hitherto so serene, became clouded, as they came within hearing of the French videttes; the wind rose, and suddenly

blew in gusts of such force, that the soldiery were compelled to cling to the rocks and pines. The moonlight was extinguished at once, and the thunder began to roll like the cannon of a distant battle.

Still they pursued their march in utter darkness, and bewildered among the intricacies of the valley, or lighted only by the sulphureous bursts that sprang and quivered along the ridges above, or covered in a blue and crackling sheet of fire the columns, and then relapsed in an instant into darkness inconceivable.

The rain began to pour in torrents, the ground was deluged, and a glance at the mountain by one of the flashes, shewed it white, with sudden cataracts rushing down after them. To take shelter was impossible, to advance became at

every step more hazardous ; all points of direction had been lost : it was at last resolved to halt upon the spot till morning. The lightning had ceased, and tenfold darkness covered earth and sky, when one broad burst, that seemed like a conflagration of the general atmosphere, broke from the depth of the clouds, and showed the whole horizon. They were already at the foot of the hill on which the French had encamped for the night : the entire position was displayed before them, the guns commanding the entrance of the village, the picquets at the foot of the ascent, the cavalry videttes on the neighbouring heights. But all was silent, as if man had no business to mingle his little powers with the overwhelming grandeur and might of the war of nature.

The glare sank, and in the next moment the troops rushed on in columns,

with an inspiring huzza. The position was attacked in flank, front, and rear, at once; the enemy made a vigorous resistance, and the face of the hill was in a blaze with cannon and musquetry. The French were commanded by Giraud, a gallant soldier and a favourite of Napoleon; he had been surprised, but he strove to sustain his character.

The conflict became close and destructive; the entrance to the village had been barricadoed, the houses were looped, and a heavy fire was poured from every roof, fence, and window. But the British bayonet was irresistible. The barricadoes were rapidly stormed, amidst cheers, and the roar of mingled artillery and thunder. Vaughan felt himself buoyed up with a lofty and maddening animation; he plunged into the blaze of the musquetry without a consciousness of hazard; all was a bold, feverish,

almost joyous, tumult of sensations; a new life seemed to have been poured into his frame, and first of the first, and loudest of the loud, he flung himself into the midst of desperate encounter.

His captain had been wounded on ascending the hill; he was now in command of the company; and the thought of distinction, and of those whom he had left at home, doubly inflamed him. A French battalion had rallied, and was gradually repelling some British platoons that had ventured too far, and were now keeping up a scattered fire. As Vaughan turned into the street, he saw the platoons broken and forced to take shelter under the portico of a convent. Their officer had fallen in the centre of the way, and a French grenadier rushed from the ranks to bayonet him.—Vaughan uttered a cry, sprang forwards,

and grasped the Frenchman; the soldiery on both sides ceased firing, through fear of killing either. But the conflict was brief. The musquet was broken between the strugglers, but the Frenchman drew his sabre and aimed a blow which might have extinguished Vaughan's joys and sorrows for ever. The wounded officer gave a sudden scream, as he saw it lifted up; Vaughan sprang aside, it grazed his arm, and it was returned in the Frenchman's heart. The British gave a roar of triumph, and drove the battalion before them down the street, firing and charging till its remnant threw down their arms at the last barricade.

Fatigued and bleeding, yet with a salient and elevated feeling, such as he had never till that hour experienced, Vaughan led back his prisoners through

the place of battle ; the dead and dying still lay thickly around, and his first search was for the officer whom he had saved. He found him under the portico to which the wounded had been drawn. The officer was Mordaunt !

The action was now over : a few scattered parties of the enemy continued firing from the Sierra de Montanches, along which they were making their escape, pursued by the light infantry. But even this was soon at an end ; the British success was complete. Nearly three battalions, with their staff, the Prince d'Aremberg, and a demi-brigade of artillery, were the results of this night's enterprise, one of the most brilliant of a war abounding in genius and valour.

CHAPTER VI.

With cautious steps the thicket threading,
And starting oft as through the glade,
The gust its hollow moanings made,
Till on the smoother pathway treading,
More free her timid bosom beat,
The maid pursued her silent guide.

Lord Byron.

ALL was tranquil during the day that followed. The carnage had ceased on every side. The survivors had returned to their new quarters, and flung upon their knapsacks, had sunk into a deep and peaceful slumber, after the toil and perils of the night. The wounded had been borne away—the dead lay, a fearful and undistinguished mass, upon the place of battle.

Vaughan, too perturbed to sleep, wandered forth to try if the refreshing night-breeze might not cool his feverish and throbbing brain. It is not in the battle, amid the confusion of sights and sounds, when the roar of the cannon, the trumpet, and the shouts of the opposing lines, drown the cries of the wounded around, that the soldier feels the horrors of war. It is, when the din has subsided; when the excitement of the conflict is over; when the groans and lamentations rise upon his ear in the stillness of the night; when in the corse beside him he stops to recognise some familiar face, or starts from the feeble wail of a dying friend, imploring him to put a speedy termination to his sufferings.

The beams of the rising moon shed a bright but fearful light on the tarnished arms and distorted features of

the slain. Vaughan's thoughts strayed with added heaviness of heart, to those now sleeping in ignorance, whose hearts might yet be broken by the tidings of that day's slaughter; and, hiding his face in his hands to shut out the dismal spectacle before him, he shed some bitter but not unmanly tears. His thoughts reverted to Catherine and home, and so painful were his reflections at the moment that, forgetful of the pride and pomp of military fame, he almost wished he had never quitted that home.

His reveries were disturbed by the sound of footsteps, cautiously approaching the spot where he stood; and reluctant to be intruded upon, he hastily withdrew behind the thick branches of the tree against which he had hitherto been leaning. Two figures in Spanish cloaks appeared. They might be wan-

derers, like himself, to whom the night had failed to bring repose ; but the almost noiseless steps, now retreating, now advancing, and yet more the masks by which the features of both were disguised, banished so favourable an impression, and he prepared himself to watch their movements, as a matter of military duty.

A little distant from the place where he stood, lay the body of a young Spaniard, who had volunteered with the brigade the night before. A moment's observation convinced Vaughan that their object was plunder, and that the body of the young officer was marked for their first spoil. " This," said one of them, " was a man of rank ; I have had some tokens of his generosity before now. His pockets were always well lined, and I'll engage, even on such a day as this, they are not empty.'

Bending over the body, he began his search. A faint groan from the lips of the Spaniard betrayed symptoms of returning life. "What, not yet dead?" said the plunderer, drawing his knife, "then I must despatch you at once, to make sure work of it." "Villain," cried Vaughan, bursting from the place of his concealment, "would you add murder to plunder? if so, be assured, your crime shall not be unreverged. Your dress shows you to be Spaniards. You have disgraced the name. Soldiers by day, robbers by night! To-morrow shall call you to account for this deed." The fellow started, the knife fell from his hand, but speedily recovering himself, "We are two to one," returned he, "Englishman, you had better let us alone." "One of you is my certain mark," said Vaughan, drawing, at the same time, his sword, and pointing it at

the throat of the nearest. "And I swear, that the first that raises his hand dies." The robbers stood appalled for an instant. "He'll rouse the whole picket upon us," said the ruffian, shrinking from Vaughan's grasp, and turning to his comrade, but the other had already fled, and, with a fierce execration, he also took to his heels. "And you, young hero," said Vaughan, bending over the Spaniard, who had again relapsed into total insensibility; "is there a hope that the life which I have at least preserved from the dagger may yet be spared?"

The vital warmth was not fled, his heart beat, though feebly. He raised the head, and supported it against his own breast. He opened his vest for air, and discovered, suspended from his neck, the portrait of a beautiful and youthful female. He had an indistinct recollec-

tion of having seen the face before, but the imperfect light prevented his more minute survey. One heart at least might chance to be widowed and broken by this brave stranger's death. "No, he must not die." A glimmering light from a cottage, at no great distance, gave him the hope of help. He roused its inhabitants, an ancient peasant and his wife, and implored of them to accompany him instantly. The honest peasant arose, and followed him, while his wife busied herself in lighting a fire, and preparing a pallet for the wounded man, and fell on her knees at the foot of her bed, to offer up a prayer to the Holy Virgin, without which she affirmed all human aid would be unavailing.

No time was to be lost. The ruffians might return. A few minutes brought them to the place where the body of the

Spaniard still lay. Having conveyed him to the cottage, the next step was to awaken the surgeon of the regiment, and Vaughan, having left him in such hands, returned towards the town, with a satisfied conscience, but a heavy heart, to seek an hour's rest ; when the sight of a veiled female figure, advancing sadly and timidly towards the fields, once more arrested his steps. Not thinking herself observed, she raised her veil, and displayed the countenance which but a moment before had floated across his recollection.

It was the face of Leonora, for he knew her by no other name, the Spanish girl from whom, with her brother, he had last parted on the day of his landing. He hesitated to address her till he should ascertain her purpose.

She passed, evidently without perceiv-

ing him. He saw her wander, with a wild gesture, over the bodies of the slain. Sometimes, with her slender fingers, she parted the blood-stained locks which concealed the convulsed and disfigured features; sometimes she shrank with a cry of horror from the fearful spectacle, yet still she pursued her mournful search. "The Holy Virgin be praised," said she, at last, clasping her hands, and raising her rosary to her lips, "he is not amongst these! I should have known him even in death."

The remembrance of his promise to her brother on the deck of the vessel, that should he see her at some future period in danger or distress, he would console or protect her, as his own heart might dictate, urged him to step forth from his concealment, and make himself known to her. "Lady," he said,

“time or more interesting events may have effaced me from your memory. But I have not forgotten that countenance. My promise to your brother was not lightly given. Is it in my power to serve you?”

The lady started in terror, for a moment, at an appeal so unexpected, but his concluding words re-assured her. She thanked him for the offer of his services, and recognised him as her brother's friend. But her thoughts were wandering and disturbed; she hesitated. Vaughan renewed his inquiry, and added his hope, that no dear friend was the object of her search; that her brother—“My brother,” sighed the mourner, raising her eyes to heaven! “*There alone,*” pointing to the blue expanse above them, “can I hope to meet him. He fell bravely in a late engagement.”

And a few tears, a tribute to her earlier grief, found their way down her pale cheeks.

Her history from that period was brief. Deprived of her sole protector, she had taken shelter in a convent, during those fearful days. It was her lover whom she sought on that plain. She was pledged to become his bride. The convent she had chosen was not far from the field. "We could hear in our cells," said the trembling narrator, "the tumult of the battle. Every shot seemed to my perturbed fancy aimed at the heart I loved. I passed a day of agony. At one moment I was praying in dismay for his life; at the next I was prepared to rush headlong from my place of refuge, disdaining a safety which I could not share with him. The din of arms has long ceased. He must have been

captured or slain ; he could not be unfaithful. The miseries of suspense became intolerable. I stole forth beneath the night, to learn my fate—I can but die.”

Vaughan, dubious whether to rejoice or grieve, pointed with deep feeling to the dim light in the distant cottage. He could scarcely doubt that the object of her anxiety was the stranger. He simply intimated to her, that he had seen a wounded Spaniard borne there. “He yet lives,” said Vaughan, despondingly, willing to prepare her for the interview, and thinking it almost cruel to encourage her to hope.

In a deep silence, which might almost have been taken for resignation, but which was, in fact, the stupor of despair, she suffered him to conduct her to the door of the cottage ; where he forbore to

intrude upon a grief which he could scarcely hope to mitigate. A shriek of recognition convinced him his conjecture was true, and shrinking hastily from the wild and bitter lamentations which followed, he returned to his quarters, to taste of a broken and unrefreshing slumber.

CHAPTER VII.

It is Jealousy's peculiar nature,
To swell small things to great, nay out of nought
To conjure much, and then to lose its reason
Amid the hideous phantoms it has form'd

Young,

WITH the morning's light he awoke. His first thought was of the Spaniard, and he rose hastily to make some inquiry respecting him; but his limbs, powerless and inactive, tottered beneath him; his cheek feverish and his forehead throbbing with pain, he sank again, overcome by a weariness that no effort of mind or body had vigour to subdue. The surgeon whom he had summoned to the assistance of the wounded man on the preceding evening, coming to seek

him at that moment, and perceiving his feebleness, ordered him to his bed, with the promise that, if he would keep himself quiet for a day or two, he would bring him regular intelligence of the strangers, in whom he had expressed so strong an interest.

But in a day or two Vaughan was no longer in a state to listen to his communication. One of those fevers incidental to the climate, and which have so often desolated the fertile provinces of Spain, appeared to be making fearful ravages on his frame.

To a long period of total insensibility delirium succeeded ; and the sufferings of the mind were yet more painful to witness than those of the wasted body. The pain inseparable from illness diseased his bewildered imagination, which converted it into the agonies of some

mortal wound. He fancied himself extended on the field of battle in the heat of the engagement. In vain he essayed to rise,—he felt the horses of the enemy trampling over him.

Then, with all the inconsistency of a dream, those whom he loved were transported as by magic to his side. The hand of Catherine was supporting his head and binding up his wounds. He was almost happy for a moment,—when, on a sudden, the vision assumed a more disastrous form. A shot pierced the faithful breast against which he was leaning for support. She sank at his feet, fixing her dying eyes upon him with an expression which, even in the after-days of returning health, often floated upon his memory; in that hour of utter wretchedness hope appeared lost to him for ever. Then he called upon her

name with a voice of wild lamentation, till exhausted he sank again into a state of forgetfulness.

In those restless slumbers, which every one has at times experienced, or that yet more painful alienation of mind inseparable from violent disease, the intellect appears to acquire a singular and tormenting faculty of conjuring up horrors which would never enter the waking mind; the ravings of a delirious fancy are the last extremity of pain.

After hovering long on the confines of the grave, he opened his eyes, to find Mordaunt seated by his side, with a look of deep anxiety, and holding his wasted hand between his own with affectionate solicitude. "Are you there?" said Vaughan, in a feeble voice, "why did you not awake me before; my dreams have been fearful." "Thank Heaven,

you know me again," was his friend's reply; "think no more of the past. Since dreams have ceased to torment you, you must think only of daylight and fresh air, and get strength as fast as you can."

It was some days before Vaughan could collect his thoughts sufficiently to dwell long upon any subject; but the first object of his inquiry was the wounded Spaniard. The surgeon, whom he questioned on the subject, informed him that he had been summoned by other duties to a village at a distance, but that he had confided him to skilful and careful hands; and had the satisfaction to hear, upon his return, that the cure of his wounds had been sufficiently effected to permit him to quit the cottage, that he had rewarded all who had any share in his restoration with a libe-

rality that betrayed his rank,—that the lady had visited him daily with unremitting assiduity, and that he was called Don Ferdinand de Velasquez.—But this was the extent of his information. Whether he was an inhabitant of that town or its neighbourhood was a point of which he was completely ignorant; but he was gone, and had not been seen since.

Vaughan felt chagrined at thus having lost all clue to the further knowledge of persons about whom he felt a more than common interest; yet he could not but anticipate the *denouement* of the adventure in the speedy union of the lovers. He consoled himself with the reflection, that, as the army was seldom stationary, it was more than probable that chance might again effect their meeting.

The returning hue of health had indeed scarcely visited his cheek, when orders to quit their present station were received; and the animating hope of being again called upon to distinguish himself, and obtaining those honours that were the natural object of a soldier's ambition, banished every other idea:

This hope, however, was for a time unsustained after their arrival at ———, the place of their destination. No memorable movement took place. The officers of the various regiments there appeared, for a time, to have little else to do than to pursue amusement, a few skirmishes alone excepted, which scarcely interfered with the leisure of the quarters.

“You must come with me to-night, Vaughan,” said Mordaunt one day, “Count Alameda gives a grand fête at his villa, in honour of his lady's birth-

day. I have an invitation, and can introduce you. The count's villa is but a trifling distance from the town; and, even were it further, you will see enough to repay you for the trouble of going." Accordingly, at the appointed hour, the two friends set off for the scene of festivity.

The *coup-d'œil* was foreign and striking; the profusion of variegated lamps, suspended from the handsome balconies which surrounded the mansion,—the statues, which crowned the turrets of the lofty edifice, shown in all their marble beauty by the brilliancy of the illumination beneath,—the concourse of superb equipages seen driving in rapid succession up the long and winding avenues, all presented an association, approaching almost to regal splendour.

The portico by which the guests en-

tered was a noble orangery,—and the breath of the odoriferous shrubs and flowers on every side produced as delightful an effect on the sense, as their tasteful arrangement on the eye. In the interior, the extensive baronial hall, set apart for the dancers, was fitted up, so as to convey the perfect idea of a vineyard in its most glorious season; clusters of real grapes entwined around the marble pillars, and trained so as to cover the whole ceiling, hung in tempting bunches within the reach of every guest, and offered the most grateful refreshment that thirst could desire; while various seats, placed at intervals, and decorated with flowers and aromatic plants, so as to form artificial bowers, were almost too luxurious not to invite the stranger to repose, and temporary forgetfulness, even amid the tumult of such a scene.

The hall opened to a spacious lawn, where a display of fire-works of surpassing beauty was the first object of attraction; rockets that seemed to pierce the sky, stars, comets, meteors, all that ingenious fancy could devise, some so constructed as to burst at once into the form of wheat-sheaves, and which, bearing the bright yellow of the harvest, rendered the illusion yet more complete,—the whole ending with a boundless blaze of various light, which rendered every object around as distinct as day, and even gave a transient but perfect view of the town in the distance, the inhabitants of which were only discerned crowding their windows to obtain a sight of this most brilliant spectacle.

The fireworks over, the guests returned to the ball-room. Amongst the most animated of the group was one whom Vaughan could scarcely fail to

recognise, notwithstanding the striking difference in her appearance; it was Leonora,—no longer the pale and dejected being he had last seen her, with her hair floating in wild disorder over her heart-broken features; but joy in every tone and look, her whole dress arranged with studied elegance, her ebon locks braided upon her arched forehead, and sparkling with jewels, and her still more sparkling eye, with the caprice of conscious beauty, darting round without fixing its gaze on any object for a moment at a time.

Vaughan surveyed this young and vivid being with a feeling of delight. “This,” said he proudly within himself,—“this is my work. I have made her what she is; I was the means of rescuing her from misery, perhaps from death; she owes her present happiness to me.”—

He approached, and made himself known to her. She held out her hand with a frank familiarity which charmed him. She told him that Velasquez was now perfectly restored to health, that she was become his wife, and that this happy change in her destiny appeared to gild every thing around her; that she even looked forward to a speedy and glorious termination of her country's sufferings. She spoke with enthusiasm of the zeal which England had displayed in the cause, and flattered him by many a grateful tribute to its unexampled valour.

She was interrupted by the approach of Velasquez, who twice pronounced her name unheard. The third time it was uttered loudly, and in a tone which convinced her, that she must instantly obey the summons.

Leading her apart from the general group, but not far from the spot where Vaughan still remained, and, unconscious of his acquaintance with the language, the Spaniard made his remarks freely in his hearing. "I was not aware, Leonora," he said, "that you had any acquaintance with those foreigners,"—the word foreigner was uttered in almost a tone of contempt. "I thought you told me that, when you took up your abode in England,—and you may remember that I was averse to the scheme at the time,—you lived in total retirement?"

"And I told you true, dear Velasquez," said Leonora gently; "my acquaintance with this officer is but of recent date." "For so slight an acquaintance, the meeting appears to have been productive of vast pleasure on both

sides," said Velasquez, with a bitter smile. "You are too impatient, Velasquez," said the lady, somewhat distressed; "I have met this officer but twice before; but it was under circumstances, the recollection of which might well give an interest to our present meeting. This is not the moment for such explanation,—the when, the how, the where, we met, you shall have when we are alone. Come, look kindly on me, Velasquez; I cannot bear to see that frown upon your brow."—"I cannot smile, Leonora; I am not in the mood just now; I cannot school my features like your fair-faced Englishman."

Vaughan overheard this short dialogue with a feeling of deep regret. It was evident that the mind of the Spaniard was the seat of prejudices, amongst

which national pride, and a no small proportion of jealousy, were not the least conspicuous. He hesitated for a moment whether to seek or shun the acquaintance of a man, into whose character he had obtained so unfavourable an insight. He at length determined upon the former; candour might do much. He might have laid a claim upon his gratitude by revealing the extent of his obligation towards himself,—but this would have been his last resource.

Approaching where the young pair were standing in gloomy silence; and affecting entire ignorance of what had passed, he presented his card. “I had the pleasure, Don Ferdinand,” he said, “of embarking for Lisbon in the same vessel with the Donna Leonora. Her brother recommended her to my protection. She has since found a fitter and

better protector, and can never stand in need of my services ; yet I hope, with your permission, for the pleasure of improving that acquaintance."

The Spaniard, at all times to the highest degree well bred, and perhaps, too, in some measure, won by his frankness of manner, accepted his card, at the same time exchanging his own ; then bowing politely, but somewhat haughtily, he drew Leonora's arm within his own, and retired, his fine countenance exhibiting something of the struggle which still disturbed his mind.

CHAPTER VIII.

Look round how Providence bestows alike
Sunshine and rain to bless the fruitful year
On different nations, all of different faiths.
And though by several names and titles worshipped,
Heaven takes the various tribute of their praise,
Since all agree to own, at least to mean
One best, one greatest, only Lord of all.

Rowe.

HAVING made this preliminary step, Vaughan thought it inconsistent with what was due to himself to make any further advances; but chance, by throwing them constantly in the way of each other, seemed to have decreed, that the acquaintance thus begun was not to end here. Velasquez, a man of cultivated habits, and graceful pursuits, was perhaps the companion whom he would

have selected, to beguile those hours which were not claimed by his military duties; but that most repulsive of all failings which even their first interview had discovered in the Spaniard's character—Pride, seemed to present a formidable barrier to all familiar and generous intercourse.

Velasquez, a Roman Catholic, and peculiarly bigotted to his own tenets, did not scruple to express an unjustifiable disdain for all other opinions. As a soldier, every laurel which decked the British appeared plucked from the national coronet of Spain. He would have trusted her cause to the prowess of her single arm rather than call in the aid of a foreign power. With a man of such feelings and opinions, it was evident to Vaughan that he could scarcely hope for friendship; yet there was no-

thing like open hostility between them. Vaughan's natural generosity of heart, together with an interest which he could scarcely help feeling in one, whose life he had undoubtedly been the means of preserving, banished all appearance of distrust on his part; while, on the other hand, the habitual dignity of the Spaniard's character prompted him to struggle against his suspicions.

Vaughan was sometimes encouraged to hope that his union with a high-souled and gentle being might be productive of conciliation; but he often trembled for the future fate of the woman, who had trusted her happiness to the power of so stern a guardian.

Leonora failed not to perceive, with deep pain, even in these early days of her wedded life, the lamentable failings which obscured her husband's brighter

qualities ; but with all her good sense and strong feeling, she yet adopted the very worst possible method for removing the evil. Though Vaughan had always preserved a strict silence on his personal affairs, yet Leonora, either from report or observation, had imbibed the idea that he was ill at ease in hope and fortune. Grateful for his sympathy in her own hour of distress, she felt interested for his welfare. Her husband, a man of rank and influence, had many good offices in his power ; and these her natural benevolence prompted a wish to secure for her friend.

But she had the unwise habit of her sex, of introducing her favourite subject too often, and of pressing it too ardently. Unhappily, instead of taking warning by his lowering brow, and half-uttered replies, she pleaded her cause

with renewed energy. Her innocent and inexperienced heart foresaw no danger. Her love for Velasquez was of that pure and undivided nature, that the idea of its being mistrusted for a moment never once crossed her mind. A less affectionate but more cautious and worldly spirit would have reined the moody temper of Velasquez with more success. On his part, he was attached to her with a love that amounted to selfishness. The most virtuous emotions of the human heart may be indulged to a perilous excess; a word, a look of approbation, towards any human being but himself, was misery to the ear and eye of the Spaniard.

Vaughan, in the course of the campaign, had lately various opportunities of distinguishing himself. The evidences of his military merit, together

with the many striking qualities which a more intimate acquaintance could not fail to discover in his character, had raised him high in the favour of his commander, and the mournful devastation which had taken place in the ranks of his regiment, had at the same time opened the way to his promotion.

These circumstances could not in the slightest degree interfere with Velasquez's views, or diminish his own share of honour, but they were still thrown into the scale of the general offence. The slightest seed of discontent, if once permitted to enter the breast, strikes root like a poisonous weed. Velasquez was nobly born; he could boast of both fame and fortune. He had youth, talent, and beauty; a lovely wife who would have given her life for his; yet in the possession of all the essen-

tials of happiness, his anxious and irritable spirit poisoned the sources of enjoyment. Like Haman, all this availed him nothing; he still saw "Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

Vaughan gradually perceived the fatal rock on which Leonora's happiness was too likely to be wrecked; but to talk on a subject so delicate, so nearly concerning himself, and to one so partially known, was altogether impracticable; he could therefore only hope that his fears had not out-run the danger; and guiltless of all intention to offend, he consoled himself with the knowledge that Velasquez had, with all his faults, no small share of vigorous and counter-acting reason.

It was, besides, a stirring time, and gave room to feelings of a more public nature. The day was probably not dis-

tant, when, again fighting side by side, and animated by one common cause, all private irritation would be buried in that one great interest, which made friends and brothers of them all.

Velasquez, among his national peculiarities, had a zeal for making converts among the English heretics, or at least for inspiring them with a high idea of his own religious tenets. The frankness of Vaughan's manners appeared to him to intimate a flexible and yielding mind; and, for the moment, forgetting the jealousy of the husband in the ardour of the missionary, he was anxious that he should be present at the more impressive of the national ceremonies. Having heard one day that a young novice of a neighbouring convent of high birth and distinguished beauty was to take the veil on the morrow, he

proposed to Vaughan, that they should attend the rite. Vaughan, to whom a similar opportunity had not hitherto presented itself, embraced the offer.

They found the chapel of the convent thronged with spectators. The young victim herself, splendidly arrayed, stood firm under the gaze of the multitude, and evidently prepared to perform her melancholy part with fortitude. The shrines and altars were decorated with a profusion of flowers. The immediate friends and relatives of the unfortunate girl, all superbly dressed, as for the celebration of some joyous event; the boys who chaunted the anthem, dressed in spotless white, with long scarlet and embroidered sashes; the sacerdotal robes, even the books which the priests held in their hands, and which they opened at intervals to recite the prayers

appointed for the day, ornamented in a style of the most costly decoration, were all evidently intended to give a magnificent and festal impression. The slow and deep tone of the music as it floated through the lofty aisles, was alone in unison with the natural feelings of the time; all else was brilliancy and animation.

He shrank with little short of pain from a display so ill suited to the occasion, while he could not forbear gazing with deep interest on the young object of it all, who, with her arms folded across her breast, her long hair wreathing in luxuriant tresses for the last time, and her veil but partially concealing a face of sweet and touching beauty, pronounced the irrevocable vow with an unbroken voice, while she cast a mournful but firm glance on those from

whose friendship and society she was about to receive the mandate of final and utter exclusion.

As they left the hall of the convent, "Senor," said Velasquez, "you will now confess, that with us religion receives its due honours; and that there is something peculiarly grand and imposing in the ceremonies of our church, calculated to produce a permanent influence on the mind; you must acknowledge its superiority to the plain and common forms adopted by your countrymen." "Excuse me," returned Vaughan, "if I venture to differ from your opinion. In pomp and pageantry, you doubtless far exceed us. Its external effect it were vain to deny; but I must doubt of its beneficial influence. It bears too direct a reference to our merely

human taste for shew. So much to allure the eye must distract the thoughts. Absorbed by the brilliant spectacle before us, we almost forget its origin ; and feelings more sublime are lost in the contemplation of those common vanities.”—“ ’Tis well, Sir,” said Velasquez, with more than his usual sternness, “ I was prepared to find this the result of your reflections ; but you will at least acknowledge that we have but now witnessed no slight instance of the power of our Church. To see a young female, in all the pride of her youth and beauty, voluntarily resigning all that is supposed to render life valuable, and even in the very midst of those *common vanities*, (since they can receive no milder name,) devoting herself to its service, is it not a sublime, a splendid

spectacle, one calculated to awaken the finest and loftiest feelings of our nature."

The vision of the young nun rose upon Vaughan's eye, and he spoke with an increased feeling. "No, Senor," said he; "no: to see such a being abjuring all those pure and innocent pleasures which her youth was made to enjoy; to hear her renouncing all those natural and gentle ties which make the charm of existence; to see her robed for this sacrifice of death as for a bridal, was too painful a contemplation for me ever to wish to witness again. Gracious heaven! what could be the heart of the father or the mother, who had reared her from infancy to consign her to that living tomb!"

Leonora, who had listened with growing alarm for the result, at this period

endeavoured to check Vaughan's earnestness by various hints, which however he failed to understand. "Had I a voice," he pursued, "in the legislation of your country, my first labour of patriotism would be the subversion of those melancholy and unnatural customs. I would throw down your convent walls. I would set these unfortunate victims of superstition free." He stopped suddenly ; in giving a loose to the generous and manly emotions of the moment, he had almost forgotten that his auditor was a Spaniard.

A glance of flame from the dark eye of Velasquez reminded him of his inadvertence. "I thank you, Senor," said he, bowing haughtily, "I thank you in the name of my countrymen, for the favourable opinion you have expressed of us and of our faith. It is for this," said he,

turning angrily to Leonora, "that we foster heretics in our bosom. Openly they defend our cause, while at heart they laugh us to scorn, pervert, insult our sacred ordinances."

"You mistake me, Don Ferdinand," hastily interrupted Vaughan. "For myself, I honour the Spaniards as a nation. They are a brave people. As individuals, no man is more ready to acknowledge their merits than myself."—"Except," interrupted Velasquez, "on those points on which of all others a Spaniard prides himself the most."—"This is scarcely just, Don Ferdinand," returned Vaughan, with rising indignation, yet checked by Leonora's presence. "Till this moment I have been gratified by your friendship; but without freedom of opinion, there can be neither confidence nor friendship."—

“All friendship, Senor, such as it may have been,” said Velasquez, with increased vehemence, “is at an end between us. A Spaniard feels insulted by the slight put upon his country.” He added in a low tone, “A fitter time and place may be found.”—“Forbear, Velasquez, in mercy forbear,” said Leonora, who had listened in silent terror, as the argument increased in warmth, “consider a moment, the Senor has reason, or, at least,” scarcely knowing what she uttered, “moderation on his side.”

“This is not a point to be decided by a woman’s judgment,” said Velasquez, doubly exasperated by her interposition, and thrusting rudely from him the gentle hand, whose pressure ought to have recalled him to a sense of his error. “It would better have become one of your birth and station, Donna Leonora, to

have sided with your country and your husband in such a cause, than thus warmly to have taken up the defence of a stranger and a heretic.”—“ I side with none, I take part with none,” said the trembling Leonora, her alarm deepening every instant; “ I would see you friends; that is my sole object; let that end be accomplished, I care not by what means.” Then, venturing again to press his hand, notwithstanding her first repulse, and, by a sudden movement flinging back her veil, the marble paleness of her features, and tears seen glistening in her dark eyes, tears which seldom shed possessed double value, were not without their effect.

A shade of human feeling passed across the Spaniard’s haughty brow. He drew her to him, and, imprinting a kiss upon her forehead, “ Leonora,” he said,

“you would play upon my weakness, but I was not born to be a woman’s toy. There are bounds to human forbearance, and some offences which the honour of a Spaniard cannot brook.”—“Then here, Don Ferdinand, we part for the *present*,” said Vaughan, laying a marked emphasis on the word. “Respect and deference for the admirable lady before me, forbid my giving way to the language of feelings that ought to have been spared. Lady, I wish you all happiness; Senor Velasquez, farewell !” Leonora thanked him with a blush of gratitude. The Spaniard made a proud obeisance, and turned towards his home.

CHAPTER IX.

Beware !

Of entrance to a quarrel ; but being in
Bear it that the opposer may be aware of thee ;
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice,
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.

Shakspeare.

VAUGHAN had been scarcely an hour in his chamber, when a note from Velasquez was put into his hand ; the challenge which it contained was no new subject of surprise. It is the misfortune of affairs of this nature, that they are generally the work of a moment, and that the period of reflection, which might bring with it repentance, seldom comes till repentance is unavailing. In the present instance, there was more time for deliberation

than usually happens. Some military duties interfered with his immediate gratification of the Spaniard's purpose ; and he could not until the third day from that on which the challenge was sent, feel himself at liberty to name the hour and place of meeting.

Nevertheless, since it appeared inevitable, Vaughan almost regretted the delay. He had met the challenger more than half way ; there was no alternative, he could not now draw back—and honour appeared to demand that the answer should be as speedy as if the meeting were appointed for the morrow. He wrote and despatched a hasty reply, intimating his intention of being punctual, and no sooner was the decision despatched, than, as many a man has done before him, he sat down to reflect upon the probable consequences.

“ Was it for this that I saved his life ?” he exclaimed. “ Better for us both that he had never awoke from the spot on which I found him, or that we had never since met.” The thought of his friends in England, was not the least bitter amongst those that crowded on his mind. That he should fall, he felt more than half convinced. The present was not the first trial of the Spaniard’s skill. He now sat down to write such letters as it would be necessary to forward to England, in case of his death. To his mother and uncle he wrote a few brief but affectionate lines ; but to Catherine he poured out every feeling of his heart in an ample and, as he deemed, satisfactory justification of his whole conduct. This he felt would be cherished as a last memorial of an unshaken affection.

His heart became so full, in the idea

that he was writing to her for the last time, that he gave loose to the whole eloquence of tenderness, and when the sound of approaching footsteps arrested his employment, he was astonished to perceive the unusual length to which his letter had extended itself.

The intruder was the colonel of his regiment. Vaughan replied to his salutation with an air that betrayed the disorder of his mind. “You are either ill or unhappy, Vaughan,” said the colonel; “have you had bad news from England?—a faithless mistress or a treacherous friend, no uncommon events in life, believe me.”—“No, Sir,” said Vaughan, impatiently, “nothing of the kind; I am fatigued with a long ramble in the heat of the day; the symptoms of a wearied body are often mistaken for those of a distempered mind.” “But,” said

the colonel, half smiling, "here is plain evidence of a good two hours' work at least," pointing to the letters on the table before him. "Do you usually write epistles on this scale? One would think that you were penning your last will and testament, or, at least, the last letter that you ever intended to write."

"The last," said Vaughan, starting unconsciously at the sound; "it may be so; every man must take his chance; and, if I may trust to my own impressions, mine——" he checked himself. "You are not well, Sir," returned the colonel gravely; "you are evidently disturbed. But this is no time for trifling; and, since you will not deal candidly with me, permit me to make a nearer guess at the truth," a sudden recollection just then flashing across his mind. "I might have foreseen the consequences of that

intimacy. I never thought well of your acquaintance with that blackbrained Spaniard. It was evident, from the first hour of your acquaintance, that he was jealous of you. The fellow had imbibed some silly notion that you had been a former lover of his lady's, (which might have happened too,) and he was predisposed to quarrel with you on the first opportunity. However, you have other claims upon you than those of his petulance. No man can doubt your nerve." "No man shall," said Vaughan; "this business must be gone through, let what will be the result." The colonel continued to reason, but he reasoned in vain.

Vaughan was roused late the next morning from a heavy and perturbed slumber, the consequence of an over-excited mind, by Mordaunt, whose wounds had been trivial, and who was

now nearly recovered. "What, not yet risen, and with such a golden sun burning full in at your window. Up! all the world are stirring." "Is it so late?" said Vaughan. "'Tis strange. I did not think that I had slept at all last night." "You are singularly out in your calculation then," returned his friend, "for it appears that you have not only slept the night through, but made pretty tolerable inroads into the morning. I have a hundred things to say to you, and a hundred things to do besides, and not more than half time to get through them all." "What?" said Vaughan, starting up; "is there news? a march, an engagement, a pursuit?"

"Not one of the three," interrupted Mordaunt; "for once it is private business that occupies me, or, at least, nothing that materially concerns the world in ge-

neral. I heard, some days since, that the regiment was ordered for India. I regretted the circumstance at the time, being not ill pleased with our style of life here; but there may be things to see and to do there as well as here; and since I have entered upon a thorough wanderer's life, I may as well support the character."

"True," said his friend, with an air of abstraction, "if the mind be at ease, it matters but little where the body may be condemned to stray." "If the mind be at ease, my dear fellow! and what is to hinder it? If the mind be at ease! was that spoken in the spirit of the camp? Why will you obscure all my glowing fancies? I was on the very tip-top of expectation, and then you come in with one of your dampers. May I forfeit estate, commission, and my

laurels in prospect, before I would have your confounded taste for reflection."

"Well," replied Vaughan, "to your business."—"My business is simply this: I am off for England previously to embarking for the east. Have you any letters, memorials, presents, any Lisbon chains or Spanish rosaries. I am ready for the whole." "Letters!" said Vaughan, looking for those written on the preceding evening. Mordaunt laughed as he took from his valise a packet of formidable size; for, through delicacy to Catherine, he had enclosed the one addressed to her, together with such others as he had found it necessary to forward to England, under cover to his mother.

"I suspect you have put the regimental correspondence into my hands by mistake. Why, man, she'll never read

one half of it." "Stop," said Vaughan, "you must give me back that letter," the chance which might render it expedient to despatch others of a far different order just then darting into his mind. "I would keep that letter till the last moment,—I may want to make some additions to it." "Additions! I should think that they could be scarcely necessary," examining it with an air of ludicrous minuteness. "True; but it is possible that I may not send it at all. Circumstances may change before your departure." "Hardly, I should imagine, as I leave this to-morrow." "To-morrow!" "Ay, at day-break." "That is unfortunate." "Unfortunate! not at all; when a thing must be done, the sooner it is done the better,—and I have a world of business on my hands. You perplex me so, that I had forgotten the

most material part of my communication. I have now acted the soldier long enough for a time, and am going to try peril in a new shape. I shall beat up the convent of the Estrella in my route homewards, and resume my devoirs to my little Clara; and, if I find her as fond as you would persuade me, and more inclined to partake the wandering fortunes of the corps than remain singing vespers and nursing the old nuns, I may even go so far as to make her my wife, and then away for India. Will she stand the trial?"—"She will," said Vaughan, with emphasis; "if ever there was faith in woman, I could read it in her tears."

"Well, that affair is decided," replied Mordaunt, smiling; "you see before you 'Benedict, the married man.' Allow that I showed a dutiful

deference to your opinion in the affair; though, to speak the truth, there was no great merit in following advice which perfectly agreed with my own inclinations." "Remember me to your Clara," said Vaughan. "Ay," returned his friend; "and to the vestal physiognomy of the old nun at the grating, who gave me so brilliant a character, and libelled all mankind for my sake. The sight of me on such an errand will make a miraculous change in her opinion of the sex. By St. Ursula, she will be for eloping herself with the first handsome ruffian that falls in her way."

"Mordaunt," said Vaughan, grasping his hand, and, though incapable of entering into the gaiety of his friend, at all times was capable of rejoicing in his happiness, "I am delighted with the prospects before you; accept

my sincere congratulations now, however prematurely. I may never have another opportunity of making them," and he walked to the window to conceal his emotion.

"You are a noble fellow, Vaughan," said Mordaunt, following him. "But all is not right with you this morning. To what painful and mysterious event do you allude. Show me that you think of me with the confidence of a friend and a man of honour." "I can refuse nothing thus asked," returned Vaughan; but it must be under the seal of total secrecy, with an additional promise that you will offer no opposition to my present purposes. To be plain with you, then, I have accepted the challenge of a rash and intemperate Spaniard. The meeting is appointed for the day after tomorrow."—" 'Tis an unlucky business,"

said Mordaunt; but I do not see the affair in so serious a light as you. You will give this coxcomb his quietus. He must be a puppy, or he would never have insulted you. You will come off with flying colours." "It may be so: at all events, you see the necessity of discretion." "But one question more; you have omitted one material point, the name of the offender."

"Mordaunt, there are bounds to all communication."—"Well, then, the cause of the offence? I am curious to know what could have entangled one of your principles in such a business." "Excuse me there also; yet I could scarcely tell you,—a chance word, an opinion, a sentiment, too freely expressed. You know what nothings may be wrought into a quarrel. Jealous fool," he muttered, walking away, the Co-

lonel's hint at that moment recurring to his mind.

Then turning suddenly to Mordaunt: "Should you be delayed a day or two, I shall leave this packet to be delivered to you. You will be particular in forwarding it to its destination." "My confounded ill-luck!" exclaimed Mordaunt. What would I not give for the next two days? But the regiment is already under orders. Our baggage has gone off; the transports are signaled off the coast." He paused. "Yet confound them all; let them go; here I stay."

"Farewell," said Vaughan firmly; "I insist on your going. That packet contains matters of the highest importance to me. It must be delivered by none but hands that I can rely on, as I do on yours. It shall be sent after you. Now, once more farewell." He turned

away. Mordaunt followed him, and took his hand. "Then, if it must be so, farewell!" said he, in a tone of unusual feeling. He walked towards the door; then suddenly stopping, exclaimed: "I hope, my dear fellow, you will give that scoundrel Don a lesson that he will remember as long as he lives." He glanced a last and almost sorrowing look at Vaughan, and burst out of the room.

CHAPTER X.

Oh that the busy world, at least in this,
Would take example from a wretch like me ;
None would then waste their hours in foreign thoughts,
Forget themselves, and what concerns their peace,
To tread the mazes of fantastic falsehood ;
To haunt their idle sounds, and flying tales,
Through all the noisy giddy courts of rumour !
Malicious Slander never would have leisure
To search with prying eyes for faults abroad,
If all, like me, considered their own hearts,
And wept the sorrows which they found at home.

Rowe.

MORDAUNT passed through the long and crowded street where the regiments for embarkation were mustering. He was roused from his meditation by the common camp inquiry of "What news?" from a circle of his brother officers.

"None," was his brief answer. "Now,

I'll lay my feather-springs to your brass barrels, Mandeville," said a brilliant ensign to one of the group, "that Mordaunt is to be the second. He has, you see, mounted a diplomatic look for the occasion."—"Ay," returned Mandeville, "the lieutenant strides away in high official style; he is clearly practising to measure the twelve paces."—"Are you actually to be Vaughan's second, Mordaunt?" said a more sedate inquirer. Mordaunt was all surprise. "Come, no admiration; the business," continued the officer. "The old Colonel, who, you know, can as little keep a secret as a shilling, in his execrations at all foreigners under the sun, let slip the whole story. Vaughan will go through the affair to the honour of his regiment; and the Spaniard will learn to behave better for the future, be that short or long.'

Mordaunt here interfered. "Gentlemen, nothing more must be said upon this topic. You of course will perceive its delicacy. Mr. Vaughan's wish is—" —"To be sure, and undoubtedly it is—" said an Irish Major, who had just come up—"every gentleman's wish, to send the man to the seat of his ancestors, who runs his yellow face between him and a pretty woman, let her be of whatever part or province of the wide world she may be, Cork, Cadiz, or the Cape of Good Hope." The sentiment, was received with universal applause.

"Now, Lieutenant Mordaunt," said the Major, taking him by the button, "as you are the particular friend of this young gentleman, and therefore may probably know no more about his love matters than his mother does, I will tell you the whole history. I sailed in the

transport with Mr. Vaughan, and on board were the pair of Spaniards that have raised all this disturbance: the Donna, a fine black-eyed damsel, with a mighty bewitching smile; and the Don, as solemn and stately a piece of pride as ever acted Dragon to the Golden Fruit. But before we had been half-a-dozen days on our way, the young Englishman had caught the Donna's eye and her heart besides; not at all to the liking of her magnificent he-duenna. They landed together at Lisbon; and there ends my story."

"And there begins mine," said Mandeville; "I saw their rencontre at a fête, accidental or not, it was lover-like in the first style of romance, sighs and blushes on the one part, bowing and fine speeches on the other, the interview growing rapidly more interesting,

when up marched that tall handsome fellow, he who commands the Spanish grenadiers; confound his name, it is as long as himself;—ay—Don Ferdinand—I forget his dozen other Christian names; the lady drew in at once; Vaughan persisted; the Don looked fierce; and as he walked away, I read rapiers and stiletos in every stride.”

The story, thus pieced of truth and falsehood, answered the purpose of satisfying the narrators as to the cause of quarrel, and at once filled Mordaunt with knowledge, and lightened his scruples at indulging the pleasure of its communication on the first opportunity.

CHAPTER XI

Love pleads for me,
And Love's enough; what argument so strong.
Absent, or present, thou art still the same;
My faith's the same.

Lansdown.

Here, then, I take thee to my heart for ever,
Thou dear companion of my future days;
Whatever Providence allots for each,
That be the common portion of us both.

Rowe.

At an early hour on the following morning, the drum beat, and Mordaunt marched with his regiment. He endeavoured to divert his mind from dwelling on the thoughts which harassed and distressed him, by anticipating the meeting with his lovely mistress. The face of the country, now familiar,

presented no object of attraction. He was discontented with every unavoidable delay. The way appeared inexpressibly tedious, and he often conceived that he must have strangely miscalculated the distance. When last he travelled the road, every spot had seemed to him replete with peculiar interest: so illusive a shade does an impatient and anxious spirit cast over the fairest face of nature. The regiment, at length, at the close of some sultry days, reached Lisbon.

As its towers rose on the horizon, Mordaunt became more anxious. It must have been long since Clara could have received any tidings of him. His letters might have been lost, intercepted, scorned. The delay of an hour might prove fatal under such critical circumstances.

The convent was but a short ride from the city : it was impossible for him to sleep that night, till he was assured that all was well ; and in spite of his fatigue, he set off instantly to make the inquiry.

The purple of twilight was deepening around the walls of the cloister, as he approached them with a beating and dubious heart. He wandered to and fro for a considerable period, unheard and unseen. His spirit sank at the moment of decision. The low and rich murmur of the convent organ broke upon his ear, in the stillness of the eve, and awoke him from his reverie. The darkness rapidly increased. He began to fear that all hope of attaining his object for that night, perhaps for ever, was fruitless ; but he yet lingered irresolutely near the frowning gate.

He entered the convent: the decrepid form and tottering step of Ursula, the old portress came on in the distance. He beckoned eagerly to her. He at length attracted her attention, and she advanced slowly towards the grating. "Who are you—whom seek you here, Senor, and at this hour?" she demanded, bending forwards, and scrutinizing his face. "Nay, Dame Ursula," said Mordaunt impatiently, "your memory of me can scarcely have failed you altogether. My business is of the last importance, and one which admits of no delay. I must see, and speak to the lady Clara, my Clara"—"Your Clara," exclaimed the nun, lifting up her hands and eyes, in utter consternation. "It is impious to speak thus of a saint devoted to heaven."

"Woman! what do your words imply? Who has urged her to this rash

step? No: you are deceiving me; I will hear the truth from her own lips. Clara, Clara!" raising his voice to a tone that made Ursula start, and look around her for help. "I dare not charge my conscience with such a commission. She is far better employed. Hence, Senor; begone! and pollute not the sacred place with unhallowed vows." —"Woman, be reasonable; take this, and do what I have bid you," interrupted he, forcing his purse into her hand. "Perplex not my conscience," said Ursula: "she for whom you inquire has long since forgotten the world. She is not to be seen by man."

At that moment a slender form, emerging from the partial obscurity, passed in the distance. "Clara, Clara!" cried Mordaunt, with a burst of exultation, "hear me—answer me." She caught the sound in an instant: "Holy Virgin!

what voice is that!" she exclaimed, turning suddenly round. "May I believe my senses!" She stopped, and listened. "No; it can only be the echo of my own wild thoughts—dreams—dreams!" and pressing her hand to her forehead, she seemed endeavouring to shut out the impression of some passing vision. "It is no dream; it is Mordaunt who calls!" he exclaimed: "dearest girl! come, and be convinced." Clara sprang eagerly forwards. "Has heaven, then, heard my prayers!" As she spoke, the lamp which she held shone full upon his well-remembered features; and with a scream of recognition she let it fall from her hands; but, conscious of each other's presence, the darkness was forgotten.

Ursula, whose thoughts were more at ease, busied herself in repairing the accident, and returned hastily to her sta-

tion, by no means disposed to permit a private conference. The returning light discovered the fragile form of Clara, leaning, exhausted by contending emotions, against the impenetrable grating.

Mordaunt, by an involuntary but useless effort, extended his arms as if to support her sinking frame; then dashing them with impassioned violence against the unyielding iron, "They shall separate us no more; no earthly power shall divide you from me again. Are you prepared to follow me, Clara?"—"What do you mean?" said she, alarmed by his vehemence; "the gates will be closed in a moment; the laws of our order——"

"Heavens, what do I hear? Is it then true, that you are no longer free? are you lost to the world for ever? Then, Clara," he exclaimed, "I will not live; the world is lifeless to me. I did not

think that there existed the woman who could have forced such a confession from me, but no other shall ever see me humbled."

"Stop," cried Clara, "you bewilder me; I had consented publicly to take the veil. It was long since I had seen you, or even heard from you, Senor. My mind misgave me. A week hence I was to have pronounced the irrevocable vows, the last irresolute resource of a broken heart."

"Dreadful profaneness!" said Ursula, with lifted hands and eyes. "Heavens!" replied Clara, turning, with an air of quick alarm towards her old monitor, "Have I spoken evil?"

"Do not mind her," interrupted Mor-daunt, "but listen to me; time wears, and I have much to say; our regiment is under orders for India; my share in

the present campaign is at an end, and my stay in your country is but for a moment."

"India!" exclaimed Clara, with almost a shriek of anguish, "then my doom is sealed—farewell for ever."—"Does the distance alarm you thus," cried Mordaunt, willing to try her yet further. "No," said Clara, painfully, "it is not the distance that appals me—of that I am ill calculated to judge. It is the thought of all that I have heard of the habits of that country, all that I have been told of its luxury, its splendour, where none escape the contagion; how then can she hope a place in your remembrance, who has nothing but affection to offer."

"But, Clara, it depends upon you whether I shall run that danger. One word for all, will you partake a sol-

dier's fortunes?"—"What can I reply!" said Clara, tremblingly—"I know no studied language. With no adviser, no guide but these disturbed feelings. May I not fear that they will mislead me?"

"Come away, child," interrupted Ursula, grasping her robe with her withered hand. Mordaunt drew out a handful of piastres, which glittered temptingly in the light of the lamp. Ursula relaxed her hold. "The saints preserve me," said Ursula; "what persevering people these English heretics are. Lady Clara, the gates are going to be shut." Mordaunt dropped the piastres in her pocket as she turned away. "I must now leave you," said Clara; and then in a low yet firm tone, "Mordaunt, you remembered me in distress and in danger. You preferred me to those children of the world who possess more dazzling qua-

lities. I will not injure a faith so strongly tried by a second suspicion ; and what better proof of my confidence can I give, than that which you demand. Go where you will, I will follow ; in the sight of our holy altars, in the sight of that altar holier still, the starry heaven above us, I am your's and your's for ever !”

“ Then to-morrow, my Clara,” cried the exulting Mordaunt, “ to-morrow I will return to claim the fulfilment of your promise.—To-morrow you shall exchange your sables for white. You shall make no vows, but such as I may listen to.—You shall quit this prison for the world.” The convent bell tolled. “ Farewell, till to-morrow.”—“ Adieu,” said Clara, wiping a joyous tear from her cheek. Mordaunt pressed her hand, and was gone.

Not to wander too long from scenes

and characters more essential to the development of our tale, suffice it to say, that, every obstacle overcome, at an early hour on the following morning, at the altar of her convent, Mordaunt received the hand of his young bride; and in three days more they had embarked for England.

The effect of a sensitive and animated spirit opening in its full vigour upon scenes and objects scarcely within the comprehension of its hitherto limited view, was a high source of novelty and interest to Mordaunt. Were a child gifted with the power of expressing with clearness its perception of every sight of wonder that first met its gaze, the effect produced might be something similar. Every feature of Clara's expressive countenance was in perpetual play. The minuteness and singularity

of her inquiries, the expression of surprise and admiration with which she surveyed the new world of life, were strongly contrasted with the apathy and indifference with which they were regarded by the multitude around her.

“What is this sensation that overpowers me,” she exclaimed to Mordaunt, “these feelings to which I can scarcely give a name? Is it that happiness is more difficult to bear than grief? I am like the blind to whom sight has been suddenly given. Every object teems with wonder and delight. Surely the God of Nature could never have formed so fair a world to condemn his creatures to abandon it altogether. They judged wrong who would teach religion by a life of solitude and gloom. It is only the light and joyous heart that beats with the true pulse of gratitude towards the

Giver of all this glorious variety of good.”—“Your remarks have opened a new speculation to me,” returned Mordaunt, smiling. “When the glow of life has deserted me, and this world begins to pall, I will most assuredly turn monk for a period, shut out the earth, and then bursting from my shell, like a chrysalis spread my wings to summer and sunshine. I have somewhere read of an Eastern monarch who offered half his kingdom to the man who should light upon an unknown pleasure. Had this worthy sultan lived in my time, inspired with this happy idea, I should without doubt present myself at his palace gate, and claim the recompense.” “Perhaps I do wrong,” said Clara, timidly, almost afraid of his raillery, “to expatiate upon feelings in which your higher understanding cannot be supposed [to share,

I will henceforth check my astonishment. Our delights should be in common, and yet may I not enjoy these wonders, since it is to you that I owe them all." And sinking her head upon his shoulder, the grateful and lovely girl gave vent to her heart in tears of joy.

CHAPTER XII.

He's cautious, Sir, he's subtle, he's a courtier,]

* * * * * *

* * * He's a summer insect

And loves the sunshine. On his gilded wings

While the scales waver, he'll fly doubtful round you

And sing his flatteries to all alike ;

The scales once fixed, he'll settle on the winner,

And swear his prayers bring down the victory.

Young.

CATHERINE GREVILLE, ever since Vaughan's departure, had remained the guest, or rather, the inmate of his mother's house ; far from sighing after the gay society to which she had been accustomed, as Mrs. Vaughan had been inclined to fear, she seemed peculiarly disposed to relish the quiet and rational mode of life adopted by her friend. She

besides enjoyed the secret satisfaction of being secure of receiving the first intelligence of Vaughan's safety.

Mrs. Courtney, rejoiced at being thus freed from the charge of one on whom she had so long looked with a jealous eye, had made not the slightest overture towards receiving her again. She had written once or twice, at stated intervals, to her "most valued sister-in-law," and her "dearest niece." Her letters were the perfection of adroit coldness, and they were always read by Catherine with indifference, and thrown by with contempt. Julia, with whom her mother had never been prevailed upon to hold any communication from the hour of her marriage, and who had lived in great retirement and dejection since her husband's departure, having no resource in her tenderness, had taken

up her abode near her aunt and cousin. Lady Lovemore whirling in a round of brilliant dissipation, had never troubled herself with recollecting her existence. Fashion was her goddess, and the fashionable alone could lay claim to her patrician notice. "Julia had not married as she might have done—they would probably never cross each other's path again."

Philip, whose policy was of a deeper and more subtle nature than that of the various members of his worldly family, had alone continued to keep up a casual and even civil intercourse with the neglected Catherine. He had more than once, in his rambles through the country, found his way to Mrs. Vaughan's cottage, and had even condescended to become her guest for two or three days at a time. His idle and extravagant ha-

bits had now almost estranged him from his professional pursuits, and all his hope rested upon the fortunate result of one or other of two favourite speculations, his succession to his uncle's ample fortune, or, in the event of ill luck there, an opulent marriage.

Of the former, he had of late begun to entertain less sanguine expectations. Vaughan's absence, far from abating, had appeared to increase, the old man's interest in his welfare. All from whom he was likely to glean the slightest information concerning him, were earnestly questioned. His letters were anxiously expected, and read with avidity; and the decisive step which had been taken, in the second purchase of the commission, was an alarming stretch of liberality totally at variance with his uncle's character.

A strong doubt respecting Colonel Greville's death, too, had more than once crossed his mind. No certain intelligence of the event had reached his family. A little civility towards his daughter might still be prudent, and could be productive of no harm. He had lately twice in two successive months found his way to Mrs. Vaughan's retreat, and extended his visit each time to the unusual length of an entire week. His attentions to Catherine had even grown so distinct as to excite Mrs. Vaughan's surprise, and Catherine's contemptuous remark, that, "from her early experience, Philip's conduct, however unaccountable it might seem at the time, had always a motive, and that motive, self."

Ignorant of those yet darker shades in his character, which had come out in

the intercourse with her son ; while she dreaded his acquiring any undue influence over Catherine's mind, she could not at the same time shut her doors against the nephew of her husband. The only person who had any acquaintance with the pecuniary transaction was Catherine ; and Vaughan, before his departure, had extorted from her a reluctant promise of secrecy on the subject, a promise which she had often since repented.

CHAPTER XIII.

I'm lost in ecstacy.

Now shall I speak the transport of my soul.

I am so blest, I fear 'tis all a dream!

Fortune, thou now hast made amends for all

Thy past unkindness. I absolve my stars!

Addison.

It was the close of a tedious day of rain, which had drenched the landscape; when the sun suddenly shone out with the brief and rejoicing splendour that sometimes just precedes his setting; and the clouds, the range of hills, and the forest that swept along its sides, were lighted up with glorious beauty; Catherine's eyes were fixed on the southern heaven then glowing with rose and purple, and she thought of Spain.

But her contemplations were but little

allied to joy. The state of the war almost precluded letters ; while reports of battles, attended with dreadful suffering on both sides, kept up the most anxious and painful interest. Some weeks had now passed away since the last despatch from Spain ; and the partial intelligence by the public papers that Vaughan's regiment had been engaged, had been successful, and had purchased its success with heavy loss, had sunk her spirits into the lowest dejection. Her former graceful pursuits had now lost all their indulgence. She tried her pencil, and covered her paper with forms and colours, but they wore no loveliness to her eye ; she sat to her harp, but some melody that she had played in Vaughan's presence touched her memory too deep for pleasure, and she turned away in sudden tears.

She felt how deeply and constantly the

human heart is tried in this world of uncertainty, and how large a stock of human unhappiness is left in the hands of chance, even after we seem to have guarded against all its fluctuations. She was now free from the pain of submission to Mrs. Courtney's arrogance, and was under a roof of fondness and friendship; she was now secured from dependence, for she was the adopted daughter of her friend; her doubts of Vaughan's regard were converted into the honourable assurance of his heart: still she was unhappy, and her unhappiness was connected with the very source of all her hope.

She thought, and shuddered as the thought arose, that at the moment its object might be in peril,—that he might be past all human hope or fear,—that he might be lying trampled in the indis-

criminate ruin of some desperate field,—that he might be dust and air; and she wished for wings to pass over seas and mountains, and be at his side, living or dead.

As the vision grew, she imagined him calling to her from some spot crowded with the dead and dying; she imagined her own weary steps and searching eyes wandering among the wreck of man, unrepelled by night, and agony, and death, in all its forms of terror, till he was found, and she prayed for death.

“And may not his spirit be near me now?” sighed she, as her eye followed the fading glow of the heavens; “may it not be on those clouds, looking down upon the narrowness and folly of life, and watching with heightened love and power over those whom it loved and would have protected here?”

Her heart was full ; she rose from her seat, and walked about the apartment to relieve herself from the sensation that almost stopped her breath. As she passed, her gown accidentally swept the harp, and it gave a low and melancholy gush of sweet sounds. Unconscious of the cause, she looked upwards, as if they came from the air in response to her dream.

“Why,” said she, “shall not the spirits of the dead hear, and remember, and love? Can the great change destroy the powers of the mind, when the mind itself is imperishable? Where can its wisdom be, but, like our own, in its experience? and what discipline can be so noble for the heart of the immortal spirit as that which softened and refined, raised and cheered it, in its trials here? or can those affections which we

are commanded to cherish friendship, fondness, the love of parent and child, the deeper and more sacred love that binds for life, be condemned to be extinguished, when all that is good is purified and exalted, when our faith is turned into knowledge, our hope into happiness, and our imperfect homage into the burning adoration of the Seraphim and the Cherubim?"

Her tears flowed, and she gradually felt relieved, and even cheered. She took a volume from the cabinet,—and, as she turned the leaves loosely, a paper of verses fell upon the table. Her curiosity was not then vivid, and she would have returned it to its place, but that its subject was soldiership.

It was a mere ballad in memory of an officer whose rejection by a woman of distinguished beauty had made some

noise at the time, and who was soon after killed in action.

ALLAN GOWER.

[1.]

They have fought, they have fallen, for their country
dear!

Their blood the day has won;
And many a helmet, and many a spear
Are flung on the heather dun:
The hollow drum has ceased to roll, !

It is the evening hour!
Now peace to every parted soul, ³
[And peace to thine, brave Gower

2.

[He loved, and his lady's hazel eyes
Were lighted with answering love;
[But clouds will come on summer skies,
And woman's thoughts will rove:
And woman's eyes will be witch'd by gold,
And faith's but an April shower;
What breaking hearts have this story told,
Long ere thine, brave Allan Gower!

3.]

He chid her not, though his heart was torn,—
Though he felt he was all undone;
In secret the deadly sting was borne,
Till his spirit grew sick of the sun:

And still, false beauty, he kissed thy chain
With passion's bitter power ;
But the strife is hushed, nor joy nor pain
Can now touch thee, Allan Gower !

4.

Here slumbers the last deep pang of the heart,
Whose pulse was agony ;
Here from the bosom no longer shall start
The spirit's fiery sigh :
Thou art laid on the couch of a warrior's pride ;
And thy love, in her stately bower,
Will yet long to lay down her woes by thy side ;
Now farewell to thee, Allan Gower !

This ballad, slight as it was, awoke a train of melancholy reveries, and Catherine was mentally wandering over mount and main, when she was startled by the sudden tramp of a horse in the avenue. He came at little less than full speed ; his rider was muffled in a blue military cloak, and her heart beat with a thousand conjectures, when the horseman leaped down, and with a pang of disappointment she saw Philip Court-

ney ! who had already from time to time paid them a hasty visit, and whose attentions to herself had of late become obvious and painful.

He entered the apartment in high spirits; took Catherine's hand, and pressed it to his lips ; she disengaged it with a look of coldness, which seemed to surprise him, and he pursued: " Dear girl, what have I done to deserve that glance ; I have brought you news that ought to make me welcome, even if no kinder interest—but I shall say no more on that topic." " Your news," interrupted Catherine: " Is it from Spain?" was on her lips. " News so unexpected," said Courtney, " that I am almost afraid to announce it ; most welcome tidings. But you have been weeping. Well, this will dry your tears. Yet—I dread being too abrupt."

His hearer's perturbation and its cause were so obvious, that he took a bitter pleasure in her suspense.

Mrs. Vaughan now entered the room; he turned to her, and, after the first congratulations, demanded a private audience. He had awoke the mother's feelings, and she exclaimed, "What news of my son?" "Yes, what news of Francis?" interrupted Catherine, thrown off her guard; "for Heaven's sake, relieve us all from this dreadful anxiety!"

"What, then," said Courtney, with a frown, which gave a fierce and fearful expression to his handsome countenance, "is there but one person on earth for whom present or absent you can feel?" She cast her eyes on the ground, like one convicted of a crime. "Do you forget, Miss Greville, that you

have a father?" "My father, what of my father? does he live? in mercy answer me," cried Catherine, grasping his arm, and looking up in his face with intense emotion. "He does, and is at this moment on his way to England." "Merciful heaven!" cried Catherine, "am I so happy beyond all my hopes?" She endeavoured to cross the room,—and, sinking into a chair, a tide of anxious and joyful anticipations rushing into her mind, she covered her face with her hands, and remained for some minutes almost insensible to all that was around her.

Mrs. Vaughan approached her tenderly. "Dear girl, look up; this event will fulfil all your wishes; you have nothing now but happiness to look forward to. All will now be well. Learn

to bear joy as well as you have borne sorrow."

Catherine, aroused by her appeal, arose hastily. "Let me hear this delightful news at full length; I must know all that you can tell me." "I have a letter that will best explain all," replied Philip; "my mission here is to request that you will return instantly to Harley-street, there to await your father's arrival; and, if Mrs. Vaughan will for once desert her solitude, and accompany you, our pleasure will be so much the more increased"—putting at the same time a letter into the hands of each.

The letter to Mrs. Vaughan was from Mrs. Courtney,—that to Catherine from her father. In her agitation, she was scarcely able to decipher the characters. But she was struck by the date. "This

letter has been singularly long in reaching me; it is dated eight months back." Courtney's countenance struck her. "Can you explain this delay?" fixing her eyes inquiringly on him. "Explain,—delay!" he murmured; "no, my fair cousin,—that is a task above me,—accuse the winds and waves." "We may expect the General almost immediately?" "All is best as it is; the meeting will follow its announcement so speedily, that you will have no time for doubt or restlessness."

She again read the letter. "My father," resumed she, "I observe, complains of my silence; yet I have written letters innumerable; there is some strange neglect in this business." "Undoubtedly; but the mystery defies conjecture, and can be explained only by himself."

“Excuse us for awhile,” said Mrs. Vaughan, smiling, and beckoning to Catherine to follow her. “Letters of so much importance are to be discussed only in a boudoir. I leave you better amusement till our return,” pointing to a well-filled bookcase. “Books, my dear Madam,” replied Courtney, “the resource of an exhausted mind; no, I am rather weary of my hasty journey. Honour me with the unlimited use of your sofa, and I will engage to sleep off my fatigue with first-rate expedition,”—at the same time flinging himself with fashionable indifference on a couch at the further end of the room.

In order to account for the delay in the delivery of General Greville’s letter, it may be necessary to state that it had been in Courtney’s possession for above two months. Nor must its delay be

attributed to neglect or forgetfulness on his part ; it was, on the contrary, a part of that ingenious policy which formed the striking feature of his character.

Colonel (now General) Greville had left England with a favourable remembrance of Philip, as a remarkably lively and intelligent boy,—so favourable as perhaps, even at that early period, to have excited some vague notion of one day uniting him to his daughter.

The present letter had been enclosed in one to himself. When he found that the General, having amassed considerable wealth, was on the eve of returning to England, with the avowed intention of settling a handsome fortune upon his daughter at her marriage, and making her his heiress at his death, his

former scheme presented itself in glowing colours.

But a sudden difficulty arose. Would not a being of her spirit and feeling penetrate at once into the motive which actuated him, shrink from attentions following so immediately the prosperous change in her circumstances, and reject his overtures with scorn? As he revolved the business, and re-perused his letter, he perceived it was not the General's intention to quit India for three or four months more, and suddenly adopted the happy idea of withholding the intelligence for a certain period, during which he should pay assiduous court to Catherine. His attentions would thus have, at least, the merit, in her eyes, of appearing wholly disinterested, and might, in the lucky inter-

val of Vaughan's absence, eventually prove successful.

Having thus worthily arranged his plan, he lost no time in putting it in execution. Deceived by the natural gentleness of Catherine's manner, and perceiving that she had almost forgotten her former cause of displeasure, he flattered himself that he had brought the matter to the point of triumph ; and rode down full speed, overflowing with the utmost anxiety to communicate the newly-arrived and happy tidings.

CHAPTER XIII.

Who builds his hope in air of your fair looks,
Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast,
Ready with every nod to tumble down
Into the fatal bowels of the deep.

Shakspeare.

Mrs. VAUGHAN no sooner found herself alone with Catherine, than putting Mrs. Courtney's letter into her hand, "I cannot," she said, "accept this invitation. Mrs. Courtney has always treated me with a marked and studied coldness. I would willingly keep up some appearance of friendship with her, remembering that she is my lamented husband's only sister; but then so unlike him: no, —Mrs. Courtney has no heart. Read her

letter, and judge for yourself. And yet there is grace and warmth in that letter; but, knowing her as I do, I can dive into the feelings which prompted it, as much as if I had dictated it. She would stand well with your father, and cannot, without producing inquiries, exclude from her invitation his daughter's friend."

"It is all true," returned Catherine; "but, for my sake, overcome your reluctance,—forgive, forget, for awhile: I shall be again among a world of strangers, or acquaintances as uncongenial,—Martha's malicious smile,—Sera-phina's hypocritical tears,—Lady Love-more's fashionable indifference,—Mrs. Courtney's heartless hauteur,—all rise in odious review; and what will become of me?" "But remember," said Mrs. Vaughan, smiling, "you are

about to appear before them in a new character,—as an heiress. You will be courted, flattered, caressed.” “Perhaps so, but not deceived,” said Catherine pointedly; “I have had a peep behind the curtain,—and, amongst such minds as these, without the aid of your friendship and advice, I shall be miserable. The constraint shall be but for a short period; I will ask but to remain with them till my father’s arrival; and then you will be my guest,—my father’s guest,—and we shall all be happy.”

“Well, well,” said Mrs. Vaughan, “I see you have all the eloquence of the argument on your side. Be it so; and now, suppose we return to Philip?” “Leave him to the enjoyment of his meditations, or his slumbers, yet an instant longer; I have another request to urge. You will write to Francis

instantly,—explain all ; tell him how delighted I am at the prospect before us,—that my esteem, my regard,—no matter, say that I am charmed at this opportunity of convincing him of my sincerity. I would not for the world that he should hear the story from others, and construe my silence into the belief of a change in my opinion. And then——” “ And what then, my dear?” said Mrs. Vaughan, smiling at her romantic eagerness, “ And then I will tell my father all ; he will scarcely refuse his consent,—and—and” concluding as she had began, “ we shall be happy yet.

“ You hesitate,—you do not approve of my plan ?” “ It is admirably conceived,” was the answer. “ I should merely reverse the order of its arrangement ; I would ask the General’s consent first, and write to Francis afterwards. He may

have other views for you. Philip Courtney was always a prodigious favourite; or he may bring over some Indian admirer, or design to marry you to a man of equal fortune. Then comes the old story, the paternal mandate, the daughter's tears, and the rejected over." "No, no!" said Catherine, with a heavy sigh: "he will not return after so long an absence, only to set the seal to my misery. It is my privilege, my nature, to be sanguine. Allow me to indulge these hopes; while I promise at the same time to take no decisive step without your sanction, and then I cannot err!"

Having arranged their plans, they descended the stairs, to announce to Philip their intention of accompanying him to London in two days at farthest; an intimation which appeared to afford

him infinite pleasure. He could willingly indeed have dispensed with Mrs. Vaughan's company, of whose influence with Catherine he had a secret dread, and whose penetration he sometimes feared might be the means of detecting and defeating his plans,

The day previous to her departure, Catherine spent with Mrs. Gordon. Julia took leave of her with many tears. "My ill-fortune pursues me," she said: "I congratulate you on having found a father. May he prove a gentler parent to you, than my mother has been to me. You will think me selfish in lamenting your departure under such circumstances; but I foresee that I have lost my only friend for ever."—"Why should you think so, dear Julia? My plans are yet wholly undetermined."—"If my

father's tastes are at all congenial to mine," said Catherine, " he will soon grow tired of London, and I shall paint this charming spot in such colours, that he will be dying to visit it. I may yet persuade him to settle here altogether. We shall find something to his taste, some cottage, or villa, or castle."

" Ah," said Julia, with a gleam of her former vivacity, " a castle in the air." " Should it prove so, you shall build your castle in London. You shall return our visit. We shall make time pass as pleasantly as we can for you in your Frederic's absence. Till then I leave you, and your sweet boy, to amuse you. And recollect, Julia," and she looked down as she spoke, " I am almost as much a widow in heart as yourself; but I live in hope and in prayer, that our friends

will return safe and honoured. Oh, that will be a day of joy to recompense all our sorrows!"

"Let me but see my Frederic restored to me, and I shall never repine again," and Julia kissed her babe, and wept. "I believe you, Julia;" but starting up suddenly, "I must delay here no longer; I have many preparations to make. Adieu, for the present. I will soon fulfil my promise of paying you a visit." And Julia, a little consoled by her friend's assurances, fondly threw her white arms round her, and bade her farewell.

On their arrival in Harley-street, they found the Courtney family, who had been advertised of the day and hour of their arrival, assembled in full form to receive them. Mrs. Courtney had so far schooled her features, and prepared her

sensibilities for the occasion, as to betray little embarrassment. The several members of the family all advanced separately to offer their congratulations, with the exception of Martha, who stood somewhat aloof from the rest, almost palpably sneering at the whole performance.

“Welcome to London, my dearest niece,” said Mrs. Courtney, with supreme courtesy; “I can hardly tell you how happy we all are to see you here, especially on such an occasion; nor can you think, my dearest sister, how much we have regretted your determination of solitude.”—“I should imagine not,” murmured Martha, “as she never heard a syllable of it before.”

“The country has many charms,” said Mrs. Vaughan. “Yes—oh—unquestionably; and my dearest niece must be

well aware that I have always been among the first to consult her happiness. I imagined it most likely to be secured by permitting her the choice of her abode, though I must own that to wean her so completely from the attractions of fashionable life in London, my dearest sister," turning to Mrs. Vaughan, with a most gracious smile, "you must have cast an absolute spell around her."

"No other spell, Madam," replied Catherine, with cool dignity, "than that rare one of friendship and kindness in the extreme."—"The hope of seeing you here," said Mrs. Courtney, addressing Mrs. Vaughan, and too subtle to take any notice of Catherine's poignant remark, "was one which had I scarcely ventured to indulge. I had imbibed a notion that you had formed some sort of

religious vow never to quit your retirement, and am the more flattered that you should break it on my account."

"I had made no actual, precise vow," replied Mrs. Vaughan; "but must own I am sufficiently partial to my cottage, not to have deserted it even for so short a period, but by little less than the compulsion of friendship." Mrs. Courtney dexterously took the compliment to herself, and answered it by a pressure of the hand.

Seraphina Matilda at this moment broke through the throng, and flinging her arms round Catherine's neck with resistless tenderness, kissed her cheek. She fortunately did not accompany the action with a long and appropriate speech. Her feelings, and they had often done her this service before, over-

came her, and impeded her utterance. She was at a loss for words to express her share in the general felicity.

“To do Seraphina justice,” whispered Martha, “I believe she will find it in her heart to forgive you your fortune, provided always you take especial care not to rival her with her adorers.” “I always warned them,” resumed Martha, “that you would one day have your revenge. I long to see how you will use your triumph.”

Catherine, without replying, approached Lady Lovemore with polite inquiries for the health of her lord, who, she perceived, did not make one of the family party that day. “Lord Lovemore!” answered her ladyship, with an air of profound indifference, “He is well, I believe; that is to say, he was well when I last heard of him. He has been,

heaven knows where ; down in the North, I think, these six weeks ; electioneering, hunting, visiting ; but it was too much to expect me to leave town at this season. I dare say his lordship will come back when he finds it convenient.” Catherine looked astonishment. “ Now, what surprises you ? ” whispered Martha. “ Do you think she consented to become Lady Lovemore, to have her inestimable old lord always at her elbow ? Quite the contrary : she married him to get rid of his company ; and the expedient has answered the purpose admirably.” — “ Still merciless ! ” cried Catherine ; “ will nothing soften your propensity to satire ? ” — “ Nothing,” rejoined Martha, “ except burying myself in such a hermitage as you have just emerged from, where all is innocence and insipidity.”

CHAPTER XIV.

Oh ! where is honour safe ? Not with the living ;
They feed upon opinions, errors, dreams,
And make them truths : they draw a nourishment
Out of defamings ; grow upon disgraces ;
And when they see a virtue fortified
Strongly, above the battery of their tongues,
Oh ! how they cast to sink it !

Beaumont.

THE following day, the whole family, with the exception of Mrs. Vaughan, and the addition of one or two visitors, were assembled in the drawing-room, when a servant announced Mr. Mordaunt. " Mordaunt ! " said Mrs. Courtney ; " does any one remember the name ? " As the servant stood at the door, waiting to know his mistress' pleasure, " Not I," " Nor I," echoed several

voices at once. "Mordaunt! Oh I now recollect," said Courtney, "a college friend of Vaughan's, brought here one evening just before he went abroad, something of a fashionable; one who knows a good deal, and tells more than he knows."—"Oh, admit him, by all means," said Martha; "such a man is an essential of life. We shall hear all the news, and all the scandal, about our dear absent friends."

Mordaunt entered. "Welcome to England, Mr. Mordaunt," said Courtney, advancing to meet him with a hand of the most ready friendship. "Just arrived, I presume. What news from the peninsula? Our heroes all alive, all stirring just now."—"Why, faith, not all," said Mordaunt, carelessly; "the campaign has done its work; but such as are alive, are driving the French fa-

mously before them." Catherine gave an involuntary shudder.

Mordaunt now found himself assailed by a string of inquiries made in such rapid succession, as scarcely to give him time to reply. One of the visitors had a brother, another a nephew, in the service. He was overwhelmed. "Really, madam, I don't know—I have not seen—I have not heard"—as he turned from one to the other, perplexed and bewildered by the multiplicity of questions. "Pray, sir," said Mrs. Courtney, with a countenance of that curiosity which is altogether independent of regard; "in the course of the campaign, did you ever meet with a Mr. Gordon, of the 49th? Is he likely to get on? Has his father made any exertion in his favour? Has he any possible chance of promotion?"—"Whether he is safe, is

a minor consideration," whispered Martha. If he does not get a regiment at once, he may as well march civilly out of the world."—"Really, Madam, I am distressed beyond measure," said Mordaunt, in a tone of actual mortification, "to be obliged to profess ignorance on all these subjects of interest. But Spain is a wide country, our armies are vastly scattered, and it unfortunately happens, that I have not met with any of the gentlemen named."

"You left England, Mr. Mordaunt, I think, about the same time with our mutual friend, Vaughan."—"Some months before," replied Mordaunt, glad of having at length something to communicate, "I saw him the very day I set out homewards; a noble fellow—I left him in excellent health; but"—Catherine felt her breath stop—"not quite so well in

spirits as in health." "I am not much surprised at that," observed Lady Love-more, "Mr. Vaughan, in my opinion, was never very remarkable for vivacity; he was looked on here as singularly grave for his time of life."—"It would have been singular, not to have been a little grave at the time I left him."—"A lady in the case, I imagine; a Spanish romance, such as fair ladies may easily conceive.—Oh! pray, leave nothing to fancy," said Mrs. Courtney, "I beg you will let us have it at full length," casting a keen glance at Catherine, who sat motionless, not daring to venture an inquiry, nor even raise her eyes from the ground.

"It is told in a few words," replied Mordaunt. "The rival was a fiery Spaniard, a jealous Don, as they all are. The Spanish ladies are dangerous beau-

ties ; the Don carried off the prize, and not content with being the successful wooer, must absurdly seek an opportunity of quarrelling with Vaughan, for having presumed to look with the same eyes upon the lady." "Strange," said Courtney, "who would have suspected this from Vaughan ; that very wise and primitive person ? I could have laid the long odds he would never find courage to talk on the formidable topic of love to any human being, fair or brown." Catherine could bear no more. She rose hastily, and with a countenance "deathly pale," with difficulty found her way across the room, and sought the solitude of her chamber, where, flinging herself upon the sofa, she sobbed aloud in the fulness of her heart.

The deep though momentary silence

which followed her departure, recalled the thoughtless narrator to a sense of his imprudence. He would have taken his leave, provoked beyond measure at his own indiscretion; but Courtney had other inquiries to make, and he led him apart from the group. "May I entreat, Sir," said he, "that you will complete your story. I am afraid you know more of the subject than you choose to tell." "On the contrary, I rather think I have told more," returned Mordaunt, disconcerted, "than I had any right to tell. I speak from little better than report." "But report," argued Philip, "has but too often its foundation in something very like the truth; plainly, has there been a meeting, a duel?" "I have made a most unpardonable blunder in this business, Sir," was the reply. "I was almost under an injunction of se-

crecy, yet here have I let the whole affair slip in the first five minutes, and before ladies!" "And Vaughan gave you this injunction?" urged Courtney. "As to the intended duel, the rencontre is, I am afraid a fact." "And the cause?" "I know nothing beyond the common rumour of the camp; and I am most extremely mortified that I mentioned either the one or the other. It was the ladies! a man that falls headlong and unprepared into a drawing-room, can have no more chance of keeping a secret of the last importance, than—I than I had."

"Well," said Courtney, laughing, "as I am no woman, perhaps you will acquit me of all irregular curiosity in my inquiries. I am, I assure you, actuated simply by an earnest wish to serve Vaughan. I would know the facts en-

tire of this unlucky adventure, to enable me to repeat the story to his advantage. He has relations. If it should reach his uncle's ears, it might shake him considerably in his good opinion."—"Most unlucky," said Mordaunt, in an accent of real regret, "yet you may rely upon his coming off with honour."—"And did he," said Courtney, "knowing that you were about to depart for England so immediately, charge you with no letters, no message? strange."—"None," replied Mordaunt; "but that was scarcely to be wondered at, considering his reluctance to let the matter get loose in England. And after all, it might come to nothing. Those affairs you know blow over every day."

"No letter," murmured Courtney; his deep eye glistening with the triumph which he was to build upon this

unwary omission. He walked away a few involuntary steps, to indulge in his exultation. Then suddenly turning to the perplexed Mordaunt, "You are perfectly satisfied that no communication, no detail on this subject has reached England. You have come alone from the army." "No, not absolutely alone," replied Mordaunt, laughingly; "but I can assure you, that my companion is not at all burthened with histories of the campaign."

Courtney meditated again.—"Of the duel you are sure?" "Perfectly." "He would fight?"—"No doubt of it. There was not a more dashing fellow in the brigade, I have good reason to say it."—"He may have been killed," murmured Courtney, "and you have brought the news?"—he approached and gazed with a wild eagerness in his hear-

er's face. "Heaven forbid!" said Mordaunt, shrinking at the thought—and overpowered by the fierce glare of his eye; "That is scarcely the surmise of a friend,"—"A friend, Sir! ay, he shall find me a friend indeed," retorted Courtney, with a sardonic smile.

He stood silent for a while. Then suddenly recovering himself, with a look of his mother's subtle courtesy, he apologized for any abruptness of which he might have been guilty in the inquiry, on the ground of his extreme interest in his beloved relative's welfare.

The ladies had already withdrawn, and Mordaunt took his leave, perplexed by what he had seen, and regretting what he had done. Courtney bowed him to the door; then violently flinging it to, paced the room in a fever of exulting and inflamed feelings. "Out of

this imperfect story, this unexplained romance, this dubious duel, might be framed the ruin of the rival lover and the rival heir. His mistress was to be won, his uncle was to be alienated." The picture spread in sanguine colours before him, and he long indulged in the luxuries of his stern imagination.

CHAPTER XV.

I must be
Envious, and so sit eating of myself
At others' fortunes ; I must lie and damnably,
Beyond the patience of an honest hearer.
But when I am a lover, Heaven have mercy!
Love and ambition draw the devil's coach.

Beaumont.

THE greater part of that wretched day was spent by Catherine in her chamber ; but, conscious of the remarks to which she would subject herself by a longer seclusion, she joined the family at the dinner-hour. Mrs. Vaughan, unhappily acquainted with the leading points of the story, did not make her appearance, and she could feel it no shame to give herself up to the indulgence of a natu-

ral grief. Catherine envied her the freedom of her solitude, but knew too well that no such allowance would be made for herself. She felt that a mother's grief is sacred,—while the anguish of a heart like her's was much less likely to meet sympathy than ridicule.

By a violent and painful effort, she compelled herself to appear before them, and even tried to smile and talk on indifferent subjects. But when they asked her to accompany them to the theatre, her heart felt that this was a task to which she was unequal; she declined the offer; and the quivering lip and the treacherous tear afforded strong evidence of the cause.

Fortunately, the whole party, intent upon amusement, speedily dispersed to make their preparations for the evening; and when Catherine, from the

window at which she was seated, saw Lady Lovemore's carriage draw up, and the four ladies enter it with light steps and joyous countenances, she felt as if the sight, however wofully contrasted with her own feelings, was yet a relief to her overcharged heart.

Thinking that she was secure from intrusion for the remainder of the evening, and leaning her aching head on her hand, while she gazed vacantly on the various objects which passed in rapid succession before her eyes, she sank into a bitter contemplation of the change which had taken place in her hopes and prospects in the course of that luckless day

Even the thought of her father's return, which she had anticipated with so much joy, was no longer a source of delight; she reproached herself for this

unfilial sentiment,—but Vaughan had been too long the secret master of her heart. “How often have I heard, that grief follows rapidly on the steps of joy! Shall I ever venture to be happy again?”

Absorbed by the painful train of thought into which she had just fallen, she had suffered Courtney to enter the room unperceived. She looked up, and saw him standing beside her, less with an expression of surprise in his countenance, than one that might have been mistaken for sympathy.

He took her motionless hand, and paused, as if respect and feeling for the circumstances in which she was placed checked him. “Dear Miss Greville,” he said, “I am most deeply concerned that you should have heard any tidings that could give you pain: Believe me, I

“speak with all sincerity when I say, that the sight of those sorrows, from whatever cause they flow, has given me inexpressible regret.” Catherine was still silent. He resumed: “So important is your happiness to me, that I could even find in my heart to plead a rival’s cause, if I might hope to see you smile again.”

“Sir!” said Catherine, interruptedly; “a rival’s cause! I do not comprehend. I am indisposed. I have no grief,—at least, none of the nature that you attribute to me.” “Nay, dearest girl, this to me, who know all? My candour should be, at least, repaid with equal sincerity, whatever may be the fate of my respect,—my regard! You may not be aware that I was Vaughan’s confidant from the first; but bear me witness, that a sense of honour and

friendship towards him have till this moment silenced the pleadings of my own heart, and even now I should be silent, if I thought him still worthy of you."

A pang struck his hearer to the heart; but she made no reply but by turning away. Courtney again addressed her. "I should, dearest girl, teach myself to respect the priority of his claims,—yes, however hard might be the task, should forbear to name my hopes, perhaps I might say my claims; but appearances are fatally adverse to him."

"Appearances, Sir!" said Catherine, making a vain attempt to stifle her emotion; "I can have no right, no wish to inquire into their truth. The subject of your allusions is free, and doubtless perfectly at liberty to follow his own inclinations,—to make his own decisions."

“ For myself,” rejoined Philip, “ I disdain rumour, yet with loveliness and honour, with you before him, I cannot find a milder term than guilty, for one who could for a moment forget his allegiance.”

His voice grew more pathetic. “ Heavens! had such a heart been mine! But, no doubt, he will write; this will be the test. He will not suffer a dishonourable, a deadly imputation to rest upon his conduct. No,—Vaughan will undoubtedly write,—if he be but living to make that explanation.” “ If he be but living?” exclaimed Catherine, clasping her hands; the dreadful thought of his death superseding every other consideration; and she felt at that instant as if she could have pardoned even his utter desertion of her, could she have been but assured of his safety.

Courtney gazed in dismay at her blank countenance and tearful eye. He saw that it was vain to attempt exciting in her bosom a prejudice against Vaughan, while she trembled for his life; and, repulsed in his first attempt, he stood irresolute what course next to pursue.

At this period, Mrs. Vaughan entered hastily, with an open letter in her hand. "Rejoice with me, Catherine, my love," she exclaimed, "here is a letter from Spain, from my Francis himself, this moment received." "A letter! where, where?" said Catherine, almost springing forwards to take it. Courtney gave it a single glance. "Has it a date?" he asked coldly. "Date!" said Mrs. Vaughan, referring anxiously to the letter; "I had forgotten to notice that. No; what an unfortunate omission." "An intentional

omission I should be rather inclined to fear," said Courtney. "Sir, sir!" said Mrs. Vaughan, in a voice of impatient sorrow, "this is cruel—thus to sport with my feelings, to renew my worst fears." "You do me infinite injustice, Madam; I would merely caution you against the indulgence of a too sanguine hope. The letter certainly may have been written after the event which has naturally alarmed us all so much. What account does he give of the Spanish affair?" "He does not once allude to it," replied Mrs. Vaughan. "It may be so, certainly," said Courtney, with an aspect of grave doubt; "yet I should have supposed that he would have been nervously anxious to explain every thing satisfactorily relative to a matter so very delicate; yet he *may* clear his honour still." "He will, I will answer for it,"

said Mrs. Vaughan vehemently. Catherine trembled, and listened intensely. "Yet, this silence is so unlike him," observed Courtney, with apparent carelessness. "Had it been my own case, I could not have rested under the suspicion of this levity and forgetfulness for an hour; but he has more resolution than I have."

In the steady and somewhat indignant gaze with which Mrs. Vaughan met his eye, he could discern no trace of the feeling he had been labouring to instil into her mind; but in the fluctuating and feverish tinge which mounted rapidly to Catherine's countenance, he flattered himself that he could discover, at least, an indecision, which might by degrees be worked up into resentment and rejection. Catherine's heart was on the rack of uncertainty;

but the more she felt conscious of doubt, the more she felt anxious to disguise it from all eyes. There is no love without some slight tincture of jealousy; and she felt for the first time the pains of the most imperious and mingled of all the passions.

CHAPTER XVI.

Let me kiss off those tears, O, beauteous tears,
If shed by filial love, if shed for absence.
Come to my arms, my girl ! Of all the pangs
That lurked beneath the rugged brow of war,
When glaring day was closed, and hushed the camp,
Oh, then, amid ten thousand other cares,
Those stung the keenest that remembered thee.

Thompson.

MRS. COURTNEY, elated by her fashionable alliance, and with two daughters still to be disposed of for the benefit and honour of the peerage, had plunged at this period into more resolute dissipation. Still handsome, though unhappily not within that period in which lovely ladies grow yet more lovely, no artist in the great science of good looks could exert a happier ingenuity in repelling the advances of Time, the only

advances that women of a certain rank are presumed to think of repelling.

A natural spirit of activity, which to the ruder eye often seems a talent for affairs; a dignified and striking exterior, which seemed made for the palmy heights of life; and an iron heart within; were the qualifications by which, having once attained a place in fashionable life, she held it as of right. The attempts to dispute her right were few; for her sarcasm was bitter, and her resentment was avowedly quick, unsparing, and implacable. She was hated, and was perfectly conscious of it; but like the Roman tyrant, her eye seemed to say, "Let them hate, while they fear."

Yet, in all her state, there was one anxiety that envenomed the whole triumph. Her income, however dexte-

rously stretched, was stretched beyond its strength, and the time must come when the struggle must be ruin, and Mrs. Courtney be smiled on by duchesses, and be flirted with by their recreant lords—no more!

After one of her most splendid routs, she had scarcely sunk into a restless dream, in which creditors in a thousand different shapes from all the elements seemed crowding round her, when she was startled by the rolling of a carriage to the door.

Her attendant entered at the same moment to tell her that a gentleman had arrived, who had sent up no name, but had desired that none of the family should be disturbed on his account.

Conjecture ran over the number of gentlemen, old and young, to whom she

was indebted; and, conscious of the easy disguises of a creditor, she felt sudden alarm. She sprang to the window, but the carriage had driven off; and the bright sunshine striking upon her own countenance, showed her in her mirror a face that must not be exhibited to any human being without a long and studious *surveillance*.

Catherine, who had reluctantly appeared on the night before, and was the first to retire, was the first to rise, and entered the breakfast-parlour, unconscious of the new arrival. She stopped on seeing a gentleman there, who unhearing her light step, and with his back turned to her, was looking intently at the family pictures. He was tall and stately; but his head partially bald, and his attitude slightly bent, as by illness or wounds, struck her with an in-

stinctive impression for which she could find no words. The stranger turned, and with military courtliness made her a low obeisance. He was a handsome and martial-looking figure ; but his sorrowful countenance gave proof that he had long served abroad. He gazed for a moment, as if trying to collect his thoughts, then exclaiming, " Catherine, my girl !" caught her half fainting in his arms.

She was now happy, without a recollection of sorrow to shade her happiness. She was in the arms of her protector, and her parent. She fixed her fine eyes on his vigorous and joyous features with a strange delight : she felt as if he had never left her ; yet she felt as if a new security from anguish, a new enjoyment of existence, a new tie to life had been created for her within that hour.

The General gazed at her with mingled fondness and admiration. "And is this the little one that used to climb my knees, that I have chidden and kissed a hundred times a-day? You cannot remember those early times, Catherine, but they are still fresh in your father's memory. Could I have anticipated the happiness of this meeting, I could never have found the courage to defer it so long." Catherine sent up a silent thanksgiving. "But it was for you, my child; and though India has left its marks upon me, I hope to spend many a joyous day in England with you yet."

Catherine fondly replied, that his presence was enough for her happiness. "You talk like all girls, full of romance," said her father, laughingly; "but I'll answer for it, you will not find yourself the worse for possessing some

of the good things of this world. You shall live like a Begum, a princess, my girl, and we must look out for a prince for you, ere long." The General, in the careless joy of his heart, had touched on an interesting topic; while Catherine, reverting with renewed pain to Courtney's story, trembled at the intimation.

Mrs. Courtney, whom the announcement of her visitor's name had for once induced to hasten the mysteries of the toilette more than usual, now entered, followed by her two daughters, to whom successively she introduced him: "But how is this?" said the General: "there is some familiar face, or familiar name, that strikes me as missing from the family circle. Julia!—Yes—Julia!—I hope no accident—she was a lovely child!"—"My dear General,"

said Mrs. Courtney, her former gracious smile giving place to an ominous gravity, "she is seldom named here—she is married!"—"So much the better," said the General; "she promised to be a fine sensible girl. Where does she live? we must visit her and her husband."—"Ask no more, my dear General: she has degraded herself and us by an unworthy marriage."—"Why—what—that is bad. Has she run off with the footman, or been converted to matrimony by a methodist preacher?"—"Heavens, how you terrify me," said Mrs. Courtney, "by such shocking allusions! No, I flatter myself that a child of mine could not so totally forget what was due to me as to throw herself away upon any one unconnected with rank; but unfortunately the husband whom Julia

has chosen has not the means to support her in that society to which she has been accustomed.”—“Bad again,” said the General. “Money is essential—yet if the fellow is a gentleman—” “Mr. Gordon, my dear father!” said Catherine ardently, “has only a noble presence, a cultivated mind, and a most generous and excellent heart to recommend him: rank and fortune are much; but shall those go for nothing?”—“Not in my eyes, I can assure you,” said her admiring father; “we must look for these young people—bring the exiles home; and Julia shall be my guest—your guest, Catherine.”

Mrs. Courtney, with the view of changing the subject, begged that the General would satisfy their curiosity respecting the cause of his long silence. The explanation was given at once.

As it had been Mrs. Courtney's custom to take flight in the season for some fashionable watering-place, General Greville had for many years, for better security, been in the habit of despatching his letters to his agent in London. When she had last called for her remittances, an unusual time having elapsed without a letter, she found the old agent dead, and his affairs in the hands of his nephew, a young, and as it afterwards turned out, an unprincipled coxcomb, who denied having received any packet from India. To all subsequent applications, made at different intervals, he invariably gave the same reply. Becoming seriously uneasy, and afraid to trust the conveyance of her own letters to this person, whom she began to suspect of negligence, at least,

she wrote through other channels without receiving any reply. Her hard and selfish nature had from this adopted the opinion, which had produced so material a change in her behaviour towards Catherine. Foster, the agent's nephew, had been unable to resist the temptation of appropriating the handsome sums remitted by the General for his daughter, and had kept back every letter since his uncle's death.

In one of those, General Greville had apprized Mrs. Courtney, that his military duties would call him many hundred miles up the country, where he was likely to be stationed for some time, and where she must in future direct to him; but, as this communication never met her eye, her letters were, of course, addressed as formerly, and lost.

In the mean time, the General having become greatly alarmed at this apparent silence, made preparations for quitting India. He wrote by an officer, to signify his intention to Courtney, and giving the same intimation to his agent, Foster absconded immediately.

Mrs. Courtney was now all indignation, and would have pursued the culprit from pole to pole. "Come, be more merciful, my fair sister," said the good-natured General; "I am rather glad that the scoundrel has escaped. These City coxcombs seldom escape so well. The loss of the money is a trifle compared with the uneasiness which this piece of fraud has occasioned to all parties; but that is all over now."

Catherine gave him a look of gratitude and beauty that fixed her father's eye. He was silent in strong admira-

tion; his heart was full, and something like a prayer quivered on his manly lips, that she might be happy beyond the reach of chance or change.

CHAPTER XVII.

How canst thou cross this marriage ; not
Honestly, but so covertly, that no dishonesty
Shall appear in it.

Shakspeare.

GENERAL GREVILLE, not altogether pleased with the slight insight which he had obtained of Mrs. Courtney's character, made speedy preparations for establishing himself in a home of his own. Mrs. Courtney, who had acuteness enough to perceive the unfavourable impression which she had made, was no further anxious to detain him, than just sufficiently to gain time to promote her son's designs upon the heiress. Could she have any share in bringing about this

opulent alliance, she would have some claim on Philip, perhaps so much as to add advantageously to an income burthened with two daughters, who, she began to fear, if some strenuous exertions were not made in their favour, might stand a chance of remaining upon her hands for life.

The splendour of the match might so far dazzle the eyes of their tardy admirers, as to bring them to the point desired ; or failing this, she should, doubtless, be introduced to the large and wealthy circle of the General's Indian friends ; and the interesting Seraphina, in one of her melting moods, might possibly captivate the heart of a Nabob.

Meanwhile Catherine, occupied by her own reveries, had formed no idea of the wary speculations of which she was

the constant theme, but wandered from room to room like a restless spirit, anxious and fretted at being compelled to mingle in society, which daily became more irksome.

She had one morning excused herself from all engagements for the day, and was entering the drawing-room, which, to her joy, she found vacant, when she perceived through the folding-doors, partially open, Mrs. Courtney and her son in earnest conversation.—“It is really quite provoking,” were the first words which met her ears from Mrs. Courtney’s lips, “to see her moping about the house in this discontented manner; dear unfortunate girl, will nothing open her eyes?”

“Argument is out of the question,” said Philip, in a still more emphatic tone; “have we not offered plain cir-

cumstantial evidence of his infidelity," drawing at the same time a letter from his pocket; "and yet even this proof could answer no purpose; read again, and be convinced. Catherine, intelligent as she is, would attribute my interference, as she has done all my previous sincerity, only to personal motives."

The actual pronunciation of her name would not permit the luckless Catherine to cling to the faint hope that they spoke of an indifferent person,—but the generosity of her nature, much as her curiosity was roused, would not permit her to satisfy her doubts by such means, and, throwing open the folding-doors, she presented herself before them.—
"Madam," said she to Mrs. Courtney, "I have been an involuntary hearer of a part of your conference; as I am the topic, at least allow me time to retire;"

and, without waiting a reply, she hastily quitted the room, but not without carrying away too clear a conviction.

“ Very superb indeed,” said Mrs. Courtney, “ so hear the wise !” Philip laughed. “ I think that we have clipped Vaughan’s wings. Probably she has heard enough. Let the hint work ;” this little dialogue having been planned to take place in her hearing.

General Greville could not remain an unmoved spectator of her continual sadness, although he deemed it almost impossible that she could have any sorrows beyond his power to remedy, or which she could be afraid to reveal. Thus he was at length led to fear that her dejection was a fault in her nature,—that hers was an unloving and unjoyous spirit.

He tried every resource that his affec-

tionate heart could devise. The variety of amusements which he offered to her were not declined, but they were evidently not enjoyed. He drove her through the most fashionable streets at the gayest hour, but without exciting a smile; he surrounded her with his friends,—she received them with politeness, but without animation. She took no interest in the choice of his furniture. She was indifferent to the place of his residence; the well-filled purse, which he threw upon her toilet, was surveyed with a careless gaze.

He had heard that she danced with peculiar grace; she now hated the very name of a ball:—that she was an excellent musician; she now never played. He began to fear that all his fondness was thrown away upon an insensible heart. “I will procure for her some

agreeable surprise, purchase for her some handsome present peculiarly adapted to her taste, and try if she has any gratitude. I have been told that she is strongly attached to the harp," thought the kind-hearted father; "she shall have the handsomest that can be procured in London." He drove off one morning early, and having fixed on an instrument at an enormous price, ordered it to be sent to Mrs. Courtney's house, till his own should be ready for its reception.

Catherine entered the drawing-room just after the new purchase had been deposited in a conspicuous station. The General was impatiently awaiting her arrival; but her head was filled and her heart half broken by the conversation which she had overheard that morn-

ing, and she entered with even a more abstracted and disquieted air than usual. A chilling apathy had benumbed every feeling. Life, with all its allurements, appeared valueless to her. She approached the spot where her father's costly present stood in all its glory, heavily cast her eyes upon it, and turned away again. The General impatiently walked up and down, anticipating an expression of surprise and delight; still not a word. He could bear it no longer. "Catherine, my girl, do you see nothing to attract your attention?" She was silent.— "Come, child, this is perhaps the fashionable habit of the people of the present day; but, in my time, I have seen ladies pleased with more trifling attempts to consult their tastes." He approached her, and said with a soft-

ened manner, "They tell me that you you have sometimes wished for an instrument; I have had a kind of pilgrimage in search of this before your indolent household were out of their first sleep this morning."

Catherine, excited by the voice of kindness in which this was spoken, exerted herself to thank him for his superb present, and struck a few chords on it. Music had always a resistless power over her; and as she leaned over the harp, and listened to its rich and mingling vibrations, her eye involuntarily grew bright, and her cheek glowed. She sat down, and plunged into all the delicious depths and mysteries of its harmony. Her performance had the grace and brilliancy of habitual practice and natural talent; and the General's delight was boundless, or only

to be excelled by his discovering that her voice was as captivating as her command of strings and pedals.

But here a deeper difficulty arose; the music-room must be first explored for a song, and in that room of Mrs. Courtney's crowded house, some of the most important and undisturbable operations of the toilet were at this hour in solemn performance by the lady of the mansion herself. The whole tribe of those sylphs who preside over cosmetics and complexions would have been roused into cureless hostility by an irregular intrusion; and Catherine, unhappy and reluctant, pleaded that she did not remember an air in the world. For this, however, the General had made provision. In the purchase of the harp, he had brought with him some national songs, which the publisher declared to

be destined to immortal popularity. One of those, to a Spanish melody, he placed before her.

LA PARTIDA.

We parted in love ; and our tears fell like rain ;
Yet still some sad pleasure was mixed with our pain ;
To some wild forebodings my mind was a prey,
But none of them whispered that you could betray ;
I grieved when I thought of the world and its woes ;
But I thought of the time when our trials would close ;
Hope sweetened the last dreary sound of "adieu,"
And still I was blest, for I trusted in you.

But tears must flow faster, and pain be more pain,
For the brightest and best of our hope may be vain.
Yet why should I weep, since the moment will come
When my heart will be calm, and the grave be my home ?
Now, Fortune, thy sunshine can cheer me no more,
For my joys and my sorrows alike shall be o'er :
Yet had I earth's treasures, I'd think them too few,
To die, oh, thou false one ! still trusting in you.

Slight and simple as these verses were, their accidental allusions struck too bitterly upon a mind already stung. The General, delighted with the sweetness

and skill of the singer, scarcely perceived the increasing feebleness, the faltering voice, the tear, that often wiped away would still come, till he was roused by a sigh that told the whole deep agony of the heart, and he had only time to catch Catherine's falling form in his arms.

Assistance was loudly called for, and immediately procured: the attendants bore away the unhappy girl to her chamber; and the General, anxious and alarmed, was left alone with Courtney, to obtain such explanation as he could.

That explanation was given with an air of infinite reluctance; but was, notwithstanding, given at an extent sufficient to stimulate ordinary suspicion, and with a skill adapted to deceive ordinary sagacity. Courtney distinctly attributed the conduct which had "equal-

ly pained all her relatives" to Catherine's prejudice against "some members" of her aunt's family, and to her unaccountable partiality for a worthless individual, "unfortunately a relative," who had, from various irregularities, been compelled to enlist as a common soldier. The General's face flamed at the recital. "Tis true," added Courtney, "that since, the mortality of the campaign, and the necessity of having officers on the spot, had," he understood, "been the source of some trivial advancement to this unhappy young man. But the occasional accounts which reached their family, for all correspondence had been long interdicted, described him as involved in low excesses followed by low quarrels in defence of those excesses, the result of which must

be speedily the loss of his commission, and utter ruin."

"But Catherine, *my* daughter, to think of this scoundrel!" broke out the exasperated father, "a common soldier, perhaps already turned out by a drum-head court-martial!" He suddenly stopped, and fixing his full, bold eye on Courtney, who instinctively shrunk from its investigation—"Upon my honour, Mr. Philip," said he, "I am beginning to think that you have sufficiently tried the patience of an old Indian. This affair is to me altogether inconceivable. Ay, Sir;" and he strode through the spacious room; "if you had told me that the girl was fastidious; that she had turned upon her heel when some opulent booby paid her his homage; that she had laughed at some yellow admiral or

duke on the retired list; nay, had set the whole peerage at defiance, I might have believed it; for my girl is handsome, has talent and taste, and would be thrown away upon nine-tenths of them. She has a touch of romance too in her composition——”

“ There, my dear General, you have struck upon the very point. Miss Greville certainly has singular beauty, accomplishment, and genius, the rarest qualities under heaven; but she, it must be confessed, is inclined to invest the common characters of life with the hues of her own too vivid imagination. All is with her, either *couleur de rose*, or utter darkness; she always paints *en beau* or *en laid*; and I should not be surprised if she has imagined this reprobate subaltern into a hero full of every virtue, and wanting only opportunity to rescue all

the way-laid damsels, and retrieve all the falling thrones of the earth."

"No matter," said the General, "I leave you to cure her of that absurdity; this is an unromantic world. A London winter, nay, a presentation at Court, would put all romance to flight with the infinite majority of the sex. But the name of this abandoned fellow?"—"I regret to say it is—Vaughan," replied Courtney. His hearer was all surprise. "What, the son of that lady-like woman, who is in this house? her praise of him is boundless. Catherine has the highest opinion of her."—"And of her son, too," sneered Courtney. "The truth is, my dear Sir, this Mrs. Vaughan is lady-like and graceful, but she is also sagacious and worldly. Miss Greville has been attracted by her manners; and you may rely upon it, that Vaughan's

merits will not be forgotten as long as his mother can find an auditor. Her game is now doubly difficult ; for this scoundrel son of her's, as if to thwart all her objects, has actually entangled himself in some sort of equivocal Spanish connexion, for which his life may have answered by this time ; thus adding dishonour to dishonour, and insulting the unhappily placed partiality of your incomparable daughter."

General Greville stood in a fever of disdain, sorrow, and surprise ; he was silent through perturbation ; but his look was full of inquiry. Courtney disclaimed all further knowledge. He regretted that he had been incidentally led into topics that must be so painful to all the friends of Miss Greville. "Excuse me, General," said he, with a depressed look and a sigh, "if I speak with more than

common earnestness on a subject which interests me so nearly. Till Vaughan came across my path, I was not without hope; Miss Greville was the first name that ever claimed my homage. To connect our families was the first dream that ever charmed my fancy. When your long and melancholy silence had overwhelmed us all with a too natural dread, it is not for me to say how I laboured at a tedious profession, with the hope of one day being able to share the result of my exertions with her. And then this man stepped in, obtained a heart of which he has since shown he did not know the value, and even the promise of a hand for which I had not yet presumed even to sue. And how has he requited her!"—"Ay, so it has been from the beginning. Why will men have daughters?" said the indig-

nant General. "But Catherine has sense and feeling—I will reason with her; my word for it, Philip, you are my son-in-law, after all."—"Yet, where are you going, sir, in such haste?" said Courtney, making an effort to detain him. "To my daughter, to be sure; nothing like acting on the spur of the moment."—"But, sir, if Vaughan's name should be mentioned, in the course of your conference, not a word that you have your intelligence on the subject from me."—"Let me alone, lovers are licensed to be jealous, and women are flattered by thinking so. However, I will keep the secret, I am confident of success; good bye."—"Bravo, bravissimo," said Courtney to himself, as the General closed the door.

He had gained one material point; and, flattering himself that he now saw the

path clear before him—"I am a Machiavel; but so may any man be, who has such honest fools to deal with. Bravisimo," he exclaimed aloud. Ending, as he strode exultingly across the room, with

"She is a woman, therefore to be wooed,

"She is a woman, therefore to be won."

CHAPTER XVIII.

“Nay never droop, nor let thy lip’s red rose
Be sad as violets withered in the sun ;
Life’s but a tide, that hath its ebbs and flows,
And ere the one be past, the next’s begun.
Then, sweetest lady, look no more so pale,
But list a new love, when the old doth fail.

Phineas Webb.

GENERAL GREVILLE was not accustomed to let a matter rest, on which he had once set his heart. He hurried from room to room, fretted and fevered. “This wayward girl shall hear my whole opinion ; Courtney shall be the man ;” and as he pronounced these words, he opened the door of a small apartment, to which Catherine was in the habit of retiring, and in which she

then was, deeply engaged in writing, and only stopping at intervals to wipe away her tears.

Pained at the sight, he stood irresolute whether to proceed ; but the consciousness, that too free an indulgence of this idle sorrow might render its consequences serious, he approached her. “ Rouse yourself, my child, what, always in tears ? Was it for this that I returned to England ? It is possible to make me angry at last. Exert that spirit which so well becomes you—and strive to forget this Vaughan. Nay, no alarm, Catherine, your secret is no longer in your own power, and ought it, my dear girl, to have been so long a secret from me ? ”

“ I ought scarcely,” said Catherine, looking up mournfully in his face, “ to be surprised at this intimation. Amid

such a host of eyes, I could hardly hope that my regrets should escape notice, or avoid condemnation. I was never intended by Nature for a hypocrite. These tears are my witness, that I have not the art to conceal the sadness which oppresses and overwhelms me."

"A truce to this language. Are you not aware that this is a sorrow which the world is apt to view with contempt, instead of compassion. My daughter must give no ground for private malice or public derision. You will be laughed at as a love-lorn damsel, and your cousins, of whom, to speak generally, I have no favourable idea, will be the first to tell the tale. You must appear again in their evening parties—join in their morning excursions. A little timely fortitude, and all will be well."

"Oh! sir, how hard is the task that

you would impose. Give me but time. I cannot appear in the world with a contented countenance, whilst all within is desolate." And she placed her hand instinctively upon her heart, the throbings of which might almost have been heard in the silence.

"I have not come here to teach you artifice, Catherine; I ask you not to disguise but to subdue feelings which are no longer justifiable. Forget this Vaughan. I know that your sufferings are keen; but I know also, that griefs of this nature are not incurable. I have seen many who have wept like you, and who afterwards, in the protection of an honourable husband, have looked back with wonder at their own delusion."

"That time, my father, will never come to me."

"It will, it must," said the General,

with a vehemence that alarmed the trembling girl. "Must I again warn you, that it is possible to awaken my resentment. I tell you that there are those at this hour anxious and worthy to dry your tears. To come nearer to the point, there is one who has my free consent to make the trial, and my hearty wishes for his success, and that one is Philip Courtney."

"He!" said Catherine, with a look of mingled scorn and fear. "And why not?" cried the General, his voice rising to its former pitch; "an honourable, excellent, plain-dealing young man. This is romance beyond belief, folly inconceivable; I had hoped better things. I saw there was no mild and gentle virtue which you did not practise. I thought there was none, however bright and heroic, which you could not attain. Is

it not enough to drive one mad to see you waste your life in pining after a thoughtless, selfish, unprincipled —; it is true, I speak only from report, —but report speaks strongly against him.”

“And *I* speak from experience,—long experience. I have shown that I hold him not free from error.”

“Can it be possible that you still feel any attachment to this fellow?”

“His unkindness fades from my mind. I can remember only that he was generous, noble, and kind.” “I have done,” said the General, receding; “I give up my task in despair; but recollect, girl, that this heart, old and insensible as you may deem it, may yet be broken by ingratitude.”

“Dearest father? hear me,—spare me. You are now all to me; hear but

the natural and last excuse I have to offer. You shall hear Vaughan's name from me no more ; but recollect under what circumstances we met, and how we parted. We were both children of misfortune, and myself an orphan even in prospect. I was alone in the world, or surrounded only by unkind relations. The first voice of kindness that had ever met my ear was from Francis Vaughan. My sole hope was in him. We met in a melancholy time ; and, outcasts of fortune as we both were, something like a providence seemed to sanction the bond of two most unhappy and bitterly-tried beings."

She wept in silence. Then clasping her father's hand : " I never saw my mother. I knew not then a father's tenderness ; and is it to be wondered at,

that my thoughts, my esteem, should have been given to my only friend?"

"You shall have time; and I do not despair of yet seeing you transformed into that happy being I had hoped to have found you."

With these words he quitted her; and Catherine, once more left to solitude, (and to the wretched even the freedom of solitude *is* an enjoyment,) resumed her occupation. It was to Vaughan that she was writing. "It is done," she exclaimed as she folded the letter; "on his reply hangs my destiny." Once or twice she stopped to consider, whether she should not submit it for perusal to someone, on whose advice she could rely; but to whom could she apply? "My father," she argued, "is unacquainted with him, and is besides strongly preju-

diced. He would dictate a harsher style than I can bring myself to adopt. Mrs. Vaughan, indeed, knows, or imagines she knows him perfectly; but she may be blinded by her partiality,—she would deem circumstances trivial, which so fearfully startle me. None are so capable of judging rightly in so delicate a situation as those who are placed in it.” She would not perceive that she was the last person in the world who could take a clear view of the question.

She had written accordingly to Vaughan, merely announcing her father’s arrival as an unexpected and welcome event. Her pride would not permit her once to allude to the hopes with which they had parted,—hopes which were all to have been crowned by this event, and which then, touched with the colours of her brilliant and noble

mind, presented a prospect of felicity almost too bright to be indulged. “No,” she reasoned; “to renew promises made before suspicion came would be to solicit a similar reply. True or false, he cannot be ignorant of the reports respecting him. If he detect unusual coldness in my style, he will attribute it to natural and just displeasure; if innocent, he will hasten to refute the calumny of which he is the victim; my father’s fortune and benevolence of heart have now removed every other obstacle to our union,—for his consent he will not fear to sue, and to me he will address the language of an unchanged affection and an honourable heart.” Satisfied with the wisdom of her resolve, and secure that it would be the means of bringing her fate to a crisis, Catherine became gradually more composed; and when Mrs. Vaughan

entered, just as she had sealed the fatal letter, no traces of her former agitation were visible.

“ Well, my love,” said her friend, “ you have had, I perceive, a long conference with your father, and I will venture to hope, from all that I have seen of him, that the issue has been favourable.”

“ He is the kindest of human beings,” replied Catherine.

“ Shall I then write to Francis on the subject immediately, as you once wished me to do,” said Mrs. Vaughan, doubtfully,—for she was not quite satisfied with the grave tone in which the reply was uttered.

“ I have myself written,” said Catherine, putting at the same time the letter into her hands. Mrs. Vaughan took it eagerly, but instantly laid it down in

evident disappointment. It was sealed; the address alone was intended to meet her eye; and this palpable want of confidence, on a subject so near her heart, deeply disconcerted her. “You tell me good news, Catherine,” she said, “but not with the voice of one who has happy tidings to communicate.”

“The answer to this letter will either confirm my suspicions, or set them at rest for ever. Till it is received, I dare not permit myself to hope.”

“I scarcely dare advise,” said her friend, gravely, “ignorant as I am of the plan which you have adopted; but let me entreat you to consider, before you make a final decision; let not this letter be rashly despatched. Beware how you suffer suspicion to creep into your style; this would be the first step towards sorrow and unavailing bitterness. The

happiness of your whole life may possibly be ventured on a single throw of the die.”—Catherine sighed, and answered nothing.

Mrs. Vaughan would herself have adopted the natural expedient of writing to Francis; but in a second visit of Mordaunt's, he had made an earnest request of her, not to speak to her son of the report which had reached her ears. “I cannot bear,” argued the penitent Mordaunt, “that my folly should be set down as a decided breach of confidence.” She had promised, and her lips were closed.

CHAPTER XIX.

I cry content to that which grieves my heart,
And wet my cheeks with artificial tears,
And frame my face to all occasions.

Shakspeare.

PHILIP COURTNEY, flattering himself that he now left matters in train for the rapid accomplishment of his most favourite scheme, began to reflect that it would not be unwise to take advantage of the interval to attend to his interests at Halston Hall. He left Catherine to grow pale and passionate over the memory of her insulted love, and tasked his invention, as he pursued his journey, to crush his rival in his last resource.

Truth and falsehood, cleverly com-

bined, form the most effective mixture of delusion; and Courtney had the expertness of practice and the zeal of interest.

“Glad to see you, Sir,” said old Sarah, with her usual form of salutation, when Courtney reached his uncle’s door; and, to do her justice, she spoke with all sincerity,—for she loved visitors, and she loved money, and Courtney knew the full policy of purchasing golden opinions.

To his inquiries after her master’s health, an ominous shake of the head was the first reply. “Breaking fast, Sir,” she exclaimed, “far gone indeed, as you will think when you see him; he scarcely ever quits his chamber; he talks often of young Mr. Vaughan, and seems to miss him; but he has seen his last of

him in this wicked world." And Sarah tried to weep.

"Now then, or never," thought Philip, as he ascended the stairs; "a desperate push may redeem all."

The chamber door opened, and his uncle's wan and wasted countenance met his almost shrinking gaze. The old man was seated in his arm-chair, supported by pillows. He made no attempt to rise, but motioned with his shrivelled hand for Philip to be seated. The sight of mortality arrived at the last stage of existence, joyless, helpless, and decrepid, struck chilly even upon Courtney's elastic and worldly mind. His purposes, stern and selfish, were hushed, and his guardian angel might then have taught him the folly, the madness, of plunging into deceit and guilt to secure the inhe-

ritance of that paltry wealth which had so little power of securing the man before him from helplessness and the grave. "Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come." But a voice from the grave would scarcely have impeded his haughty heart in the pursuit of his avarice and ambition.

"I had heard that you were ill and alone, Sir," said he, in a voice of condolence, "and hastened to see if my presence could be of any service to you." "I am always ill and alone," said Vaughan bitterly; "the old man is no longer fit society for the young. He must not expect them to give up a particle of the world's enjoyments to cheer his last hours. My lamp of life is fast expiring, boy; and neither neglect nor attention

can now much hasten or retard its decay."

Courtney was startled; but he had too much confidence in his own art to despair. "Heavens, my dear uncle!" he exclaimed, "I hope and trust you have many long and happy years before you.—The weather is unfavourable, and felt by persons of every age."

The love of life still clung to the old man. "I may have been out of spirits, Sir; but I still live, and take some interest in what is passing round me. Have you any news?"—"I am so convinced of it, Sir," answered Philip, "that I came here expressly to consult you on one of the most important actions of any man's life. And were young men oftener to suffer their conduct to be regulated by the advice and experience of their seniors, they would

escape half the errors and imprudences of their being.”

“ Justly said, Sir : but to the point, to the point.”

“ The question on which I wish to consult you was simply this. As I have now a tolerable prospect of advancement in my profession, and am besides eight-and-twenty——” “ Eight-and-twenty ! Impossible !” interrupted Vaughan, in surprise ; “ it seems but as yesterday when your mother sent me notice in all due form of having given an heir to the house of Courtney. Ay, those were the words ; and I remember how my brother, that unfortunate Edward, and myself (for we were fast friends in those days) laughed at the expression. Ay, that was your mother’s style, boy ; proud as Lucifer. Her first

born must be an heir, though the estate was in the moon."

"I was thinking, as I am at least arrived at years of discretion, it must be as well for me to marry."

"Marry! Why, I was fifty years old before I even thought of any thing of the kind," returned Vaughan, who always measured his standard of right and wrong by his own life; "but I had common sense; and here I am a bachelor still. But have you the means; are you rich, frugal, and patient; able to stand the waste of a woman's extravagance, and the fire of a wife's tongue?"

"I hope, Sir," answered Philip, "though I cannot boast of affluence, my past and future exertions will at least preserve me from debts and difficulties. We shall begin frugally. Hav-

ing but little to spend, we shall early learn economy; and diligence, and economy united——.”

“Very true; an excellent maxim for a young man to begin the world with; a young man of small fortune, and without expectations.”

Courtney was not exactly pleased with the conclusion of this speech; but the critical situation in which he saw himself placed, acted rather as a stimulus than a check to his eloquence.

“I am glad, my dear uncle,” he pursued, with an unaltered tone, “to have met your approbation so far; but one scruple yet remains. I am doubtful—the young lady having been previously engaged to my cousin Vaughan; how far (should I succeed, of which I am not altogether certain) I may rely upon her sincerity.”

“Previously engaged to Francis Vaughan!” said the old man, knitting his wrinkled brows, “what could involve him in any engagement of the kind?—a pennyless orphan!”

“Perhaps I might have made use of a wrong term, it might have been merely a conditional promise in case——”

“In case of the old man’s death, and the event of his making a will in the fellow’s favour. This it is to be surrounded by dependent relatives.”

“No, let me acquit my cousin of all mercenary views. Let the promise be of what nature it might, it does not seem to have troubled his recollection long. I understand he has been since paying his devoirs in another quarter, and even involved in a squabble on the lady’s account.”

“In love and out of love, and a rioter;

so much for the rising generation of premature vices. Yet are you sure of what you say?"

"Totally sure, my dear uncle; but you are almost too severe. You should make allowance for the natural heedlessness of soldiers. Yet should he have escaped with life, his utter ruin may be the consequence. The articles of war are strong, are severe, and in the event his commission may not be worth a straw."

These words, said with a commonplace air, sank deep and venomous; fixing his glassy eyes upon Courtney's countenance, with an expression of intense vexation, the old man pronounced, "Not worth a straw! my bounty twice thrown away!—I was born to be the dupe of fools and knaves. Yes, twice," repeated Vaughan, raising his voice as

high as his feeble powers would permit, his impaired memory, roused by the anger of the moment, seeming to return with a flash before the period of its final extinction. "Have you never heard the story? his suffering himself to be swindled out of his money; my money, Sir, by a spendthrift companion, a needy vagabond, who, I am convinced, never meant to repay him. Yet I forgave him that offence; I overlooked the indecision of youth. His penitence, his subsequent good conduct; his candour, I will not deny him candour; no, he had generosity enough to reveal the whole; all had their effect; and I made up the loss. But I thought him principled—"

"And I, too," said the unprincipled Courtney, led by progressive steps to direct falsehood, "I gave him credit for

honour ; yet I, his declared, his bosom friend, never heard a word of this before. I knew him indeed to be involved in difficulties at the time ; overwhelmed with debts which he had no hope of paying. It is totally impossible that he would, for the sake of *serving* a friend, part with that which presented the only means of keeping himself out of a jail. In fact, my dearest uncle, I cannot bring myself to believe the money to have been ever thus bestowed."

The old man shuddered : his whole frame appeared convulsed ; he sank back in his chair ; his face assumed a mortal paleness ; the feeble spark of life quivered in the socket ; it was evident that this rude discovery had gone high to extinguish it altogether. He exclaimed, in a voice of anguish, " Is this the end of all my hopes ? You have robbed my

closing hour of its last solace. Heaven knows how few indeed have been the hours of enjoyment which that wealth has procured for me, which it took me a life to bring together; but I had thought that I had found no unworthy use for it, when I made Francis Vaughan my heir."

"Your heir, Sir? good heavens! your heir!" said Courtney, springing from his seat, thunderstruck at the intelligence.

"Yes, Sir, my heir!" answered the old man, firmly. "What have you to say against it! Think well before you reply." He sent a fiery glance at the incautious liar. "I am dying, Sir—I am dying! Can you lay your hand upon your heart, and pronounce your accusation true?"

Courtney was staggered by the so-

lemn appeal. His courage failed him for an instant; but he, dexterously, recovering his presence of mind, evaded an immediate answer, by hastening to the support of his uncle, and affecting strong commiseration for his obvious feebleness. "You are ill, Sir; very ill; I was wrong to shock you by such a detail; I did not know the extent of your sensibility; in your chamber you will be more at ease;" and ringing the bell violently, he consigned his uncle to the care of Peter.

He sat long absorbed in tumultuous and bitter reflections, when the sight of his servant Benson, passing the window, roused him from his reverie.

Though Benson performed the offices of a domestic, he was regarded by Courtney, privately, more in the light of a humble friend than of a menial. He

was a man whom a long course of folly and vice had reduced, but not wholly without education, and possessing an acuteness which Courtney had found extremely serviceable on occasion. He had once, at an earlier period of his life, in a fit of rare generosity, rescued this man from the grasp of a creditor; since which period there had been a sort of tie between them—that species of connexion which links one subtle and sordid spirit to another, at least till interest suggests any very decided advantage to be gained by its dissolution. Courtney, degraded by deviations from the straight path of integrity, had found it essential to employ some humble abettor, some one to appear in transactions, in which he dared not figure in his own person, some one ready to run the risk and endure the obloquy.

Benson had been this convenient tool to Courtney. He was a fellow who, for his hire, would intercept a letter, or write such a letter as should be dictated to him; without being scrupulous as to the purpose. He had been long promised a rich fee, should he succeed in favouring either of his master's present schemes. Courtney beckoned him into the room, and in a few agitated words, explained the cause. "My uncle is dying—he has made a will totally in Vaughan's favour. I am undone for ever—" and at the thought, he clasped his hands together in rage and despair.

Benson stood looking calmly at him, and without uttering a syllable. "I tell you," repeated Courtney, seizing him by the arm, "the will is made, he is dying."—"Well," returned Benson, with a subtle smile, "but is he yet dead?

Is not the heir abroad? Can he defend himself? And are you not at hand to ruin him, if you like?" "All has been already tried," returned Courtney. "No plausible story, Sir," said Benson. "Ay, that was tried too, and it failed, miserably failed. The old man's appeal as to its truth was so strong, that I do not know what came over me, but I could not go through it."

Benson's smile assumed a yet darker meaning. It was that smile, mingled of derision and affected incredulity, which perhaps of all others throws its object into the most perfect self-contempt. "And to-morrow, Sir, when your uncle is lying a corpse before you, and his estate will have passed into another's hands, where will your prospects be? Or have you courage to unmask the whole scheme, and declare the

whole a calumny; no doubt, that would be an act of more than common virtue.”—“Of more than I possess,” cried Courtney. “It cannot be. There is no alternative, no resource, but in acts of more than common—no, not treachery, it is self-defence, not treachery,” shuddering as he pronounced the word. “I think I have that fierce old man before me still; but he is dying, and there is no time to be lost.” Benson laughed almost aloud. Courtney started, but the menial composed his features at the instant; and Courtney walked slowly and haughtily to the door, muttering, “Ruin is before me.—I must plunge deeper still;” and with a wild look at his accomplice, he burst up stairs, and entered his uncle’s chamber.

CHAPTER XX.

Oh, who could see that lady's starry eye ;
And see of her sweet lip the deathly dye ;
And see the raven richness of her hair
Tost on her brow of beautiful despair ;
And see her roseless cheek upon the ground ;
And her heart bleed—yet turn, nor stannch the wound ?

Phineas Webb

THE day on which Mordaunt left Vaughan, spite of its gloom and anxiety, glided rapidly away. It is said, "Sad hours seem long." But his worldly occupations, and how much must necessarily crowd into one day, when it is deemed the last, appeared interminable ; and when the shades of evening closed upon his labours, he felt, with a heavy heart, how short had been the space al-

lotted to him to prepare for the chances of the morrow.

The revelry of his companions in an adjoining apartment struck a chill and joyless feeling to his heart. He could even distinguish the voices of some who had professed the strongest interest in his friendship. "And 'tis this heartless crew, these beings whose opinions on all other points I scorn, and whose conduct I despise, that compel me to this wretched extremity." He heard his name followed by a bumper and a burst of laughter. "Ay," said he, "they will tread on my grave to-morrow, or step into my place, without one pang of memory." He rushed indignantly from his chamber.

He reached the fields, and flung himself at the foot of a huge oak, whose dark and massive shelter would have

invited a heart at ease to no unwelcome repose. "Farewell, the hopes of my boyhood!—farewell, the dreams of ambition!—farewell, friendship and love,—farewell—" and his heart sank as he pronounced the name—"my Catherine!"

There was an oppressive stillness in the air; not a breath agitated the thick foliage around, but once or twice a faint rustling appeared to indicate the approach of footsteps, and once or twice he had looked up, prepared to chide and repel the intruders. But the sound passed away; again he leaned his feverish cheek on his hand, and mused. "It was on a night like this, ay, and at this hour, that I saved the life of Velasquez from the dagger, and for what? to see him pursue mine with blind and savage hate. I could almost fancy myself

surrounded by those spectacles of horror which then lay before me."

At that moment a figure gliding slowly, and with an almost soundless motion, towards the spot where he was lying, completed the illusion. It seemed to his half-slumbering mind, as if sleep had utterly overtaken him, and a vision of the past had stolen upon his senses.

He placed his hand before his eyes in strange and mingled awe; the next instant he felt his arm grasped, as by one in agitation, and a voice, sweet yet faltering and hollow, called on his name. "Awake, arouse, Sénor Vaughan—look up and hear me." He started to his feet. The figure knelt before him. "I will never rise from this posture of supplication. I will never quit this spot, till you have sworn to me on your bended knee, by a soldier's honour, that you will grant the request which I came hither

to make. I have watched through the whole of this wretched day for the opportunity which is now arrived. Let it not have been in vain." The figure raised her veil, and Vaughan, to his astonishment, saw the lovely wife of Velasquez.

He was deeply pained, and vainly endeavoured to raise her from the ground. "Sweet lady, spare me the pain of refusing the only petition of your's that I could bring myself to deny."

"I will not, I cannot rise; I am wild with apprehension; but I have no time to waste in dwelling on my fears. In a word, will you forego your purpose of to-morrow? My happiness or misery depends upon the decision of this hour: have you the heart to send me to the grave?"

"Lady," said Vaughan, looking anxiously around, and moved even to weakness, "spare me, spare yourself. Should

Velasquez discover you here, and at this hour, under such circumstances, I tremble for your happiness. I beseech you, leave me."

"It is in vain, Sénor," said Leonora, faintly, "that you attempt to intimidate me. If there were a thousand witnesses, I should kneel here. I know well my risk, but it is to save lives far more valuable than my own; lives for which the tears of my country would be shed, that I came, and with such an object in view, I scorn to tremble. I can die before you, but I cannot relinquish the purpose with which I sought you."

A gleam of feeble moonlight fell on her face, pale as monumental marble, and Vaughan, for the first time, was struck by some resemblance of Catherine. He involuntarily touched her forehead with his burning lips, and without

a word led her into the open air. He pointed to the lamp of the Madonna which showed the entrance into the village. But she still would not leave him. She continued repeating, in a low and bewildered tone, "My husband *shall* be saved."

"Dear Lady—Donna Leonora, in pity, do not upbraid me. I call Heaven to witness, that I did not seek this quarrel—but I am not the less bound to abide its consequences."

"Obdurate man, stop one moment, and contemplate the fate that you have prepared for yourself and me. To-morrow's sun shall doom you to the long, last dreadful sleep—or *worse*, to sleep no more. Yes, I repeat it, should my husband fall by your hand, the image of him whom you have murdered will haunt you—the wasted form of the desolate widow you have made will pass

before your eyes, the cries of her bereaved heart will break upon your ear, in the stillness of the night. No! never shall you sleep the sleep of peace again!" Vaughan at once sighed and smiled.

"Think then of earthly agonies, of the tears of your mother, S  nor; or if there be a name yet dearer to your memory, of her's whose image will cling the latest round your heart; and shall they not prevail, though mine you scorn?" And she burst into loud and bitter weeping.

"Bathe with those tears the cheek of the proud Velasquez, Donna Leonora," answered Vaughan,—“try the same arguments with him that you have used with me—and if they succeed in subduing his haughty spirit, I too will own myself vanquished.” “The proposal is mockery,” cried the wretched Leonora,

clasping her hands in the agony of despair; "hope is at an end for ever; you know that I dare not. Velasquez is impenetrable. I have wept, I have prayed all this day before him, I have kissed the ground at his feet; and he spurned me from him—I am undone."

The lofty tone which had astonished the listening Vaughan, by the heroine heart which it seemed to indicate, had melted with these words into one of sweet but overwhelming sadness. The temporary excitement which had lifted her above her nature, gave way to the gentle feelings which it had restrained, but not subdued. She flung herself in anguish upon the dewy shrubs at her feet, and throwing one arm as if for support, round the trunk of a leafless laurel beside which she had sunk, she pointed with the other to the sky, then flashing with ten thousand stars.

“ My sole hope,” she exclaimed, turning to Vaughan, “ was in you,—I relied upon your promise to him who is now a saint in Heaven;” and she continued pointing, as if she invoked her brother’s spirit, to bear witness to its fulfilment. “ Did you not promise to protect me in danger—to console me in distress—and is it for you to plunge me into grief which refuses all consolation?”

She kissed the cross on her bosom; and then added, with the same solemnity of tone and manner, “ When last we met at this lonely hour, by the light of those stars, you felt for my anguish; you led me to the spot where my wounded hero lay. Velasquez and I are now united by holier bonds; and you would deny the life of the husband to the prayer of the wretched wife.”

“ Lady,” said Vaughan, deeply af-

fect, “ thus far will I permit myself to calm your fears. Your husband’s life on that eventful night was in far greater danger, than it shall ever be from me. On that night of which you speak, the robber’s weapon was at his heart. And by all the honourable sentiments that can influence me, I feel at this hour as much anxiety to preserve his life, as I did then to defend it.”

He stopped suddenly ; the generous reluctance to speak of his own services checked the explanation already on his lips. Leonora’s eye gleamed like a flash of lightning, she sprang from the ground. “ By whom, by what,” cried she, in breathless eagerness, “ was he saved ? ” “ By an ever watchful and merciful Providence,” said Vaughan, recovering himself on the instant. A sudden delight appeared to illuminate Leonora’s features. A hope, the cause of which

Vaughan was at a loss to conjecture, was in her wreathed and rosy smile.

“ You will think me a trifler, Sénor,” at length she said, “ for what I am now about to say. No matter, I am content to be thought so to-night. I have, Sénor, a treasure which came into my hands by chance. A sudden recollection of the time and place in which it was found, have impressed me with the idea that you are the true owner.”

She drew at the same time a small trinket from her breast. “ To my thoughts memorials of this kind may not be unjoyously regained, even in such an hour as this.” As she spoke the moon-light shone upon the ornament which she held up in her hand, and Vaughan recognised at the first glance the locket which he had received from Catherine. It had been long the object of his most anxious

search. He caught it from Leonora's hand, and pressed it passionately to his lips. "My companion till death—my amulet through the troubles of existence, my preserver from all future ill!—regained, never to be lost again."

"Adieu, Sénor," said Leonora, waving her hand, and retreating with the light step of one who had attained the full object for which she sought the interview. "Adieu, we *shall* meet again;" and leaving him to muse upon the apparent inconsistency of her conduct; ere he had time for inquiry or gratitude, he saw her at a distance, that showed her, in the silver light, like a floating vision.

CHAPTER XXI.

Here are they, Sir? Their shining rapiers out ;
Wrath on their sallow lips ; their eyes are fierce,
Lighted with jealous flame. See how they stand,
Like tigers seeking 'vantage. Now they spring—
There will be murder ; rush upon them straight ;
Beat down their swords——

Phineas Webb.

It was a lovely morning when Vaughan, with a perturbed heart, went to the place of meeting. As he advanced, he could discern the tall and stately figure of Velasquez, a striking, and indeed the only living object visible in that secluded spot, and he hurried forwards. The spot of the rendezvous was well chosen, as affording security from intrusion ; but so lovely, so sweet, so

serene was the aspect of every thing around, that it seemed formed to lull all the angry passions to rest. A little rivulet, so clearly transparent as to reflect in unbroken beauty the cloudless sky, and the brilliant green of the overhanging trees, ran murmuring at their feet. Velasquez, his arms folded, his brows bent, his whole countenance evidently the prey of conflicting but stifled emotions, stood with his eyes fixed vacantly on the stream, and apparently unconscious of his antagonist's approach.

Vaughan gazed at him awhile with mingled feelings of surprise and compassion; but the Spaniard remained so long in this moody silence, that he at length deemed it necessary to remind him of his presence. Velasquez turned fiercely round, and looked at him with an expression so wild and singular, that

Vaughan felt at a loss to interpret its meaning. "I need not, Senor Inglese," he said, "be reminded of the intention with which I came here ; I know it but too well !" and as he spoke, he drew pistols from his belt. He stood for awhile with them in his hand ; he then fired them successively in the air, and with an impassioned and frantic gesture, flung them both into the stream by his side. "I have scared the fiend from my heart," he exclaimed, "so perish the remembrance of this rash adventure ! Yes, Senor," said he, in a still louder tone, "I have hated you with mortal hate—I thirsted for your blood !—but it may not be. You saved my life ; and now, since all is known, to revenge my injuries were an act of unmanliness, of unholy ingratitude, an act which shall never stain the name of

Velasquez. But would to heaven that my happier destiny had ordained that I should make this acknowledgment to any man living but you!"

"Senor Velasquez," said Vaughan, in a tone strikingly contrasted with the broken and hurried accents of the impetuous Spaniard, "this causeless animosity, and the discovery of a service that I had supposed unseen by any human being, are alike mysteries to me. We met with the view of terminating our unhappy difference, by the sacrifice of one of our lives. Let us not part till all strife is ended between us, either by our weapons, or, if you so please, by the more welcome expedient of mutual explanation."

"It is enough," said Velasquez, coldly, "that we have ceased to be enemies, we were never born to be

friends. The discovery which amazes you was owing to no miracle. Woman's wit never fails her ; and by means of that trinket which you lost, my wife ascertained my debt of gratitude. What was her motive for prosecuting the inquiry, whether it was with the view of saving my life or yours, I leave to heaven and her own conscience to determine." Velasquez almost gnashed his teeth furiously as he spoke, and gazed at Vaughan with a flashing eye.

Vaughan returned his gaze with an expression of deep sympathy, but made no immediate reply. A fine and generous mind, deformed by ungovernable passion, presented a painful and humiliating view of human nature. Vaughan unconsciously stooped, and taking up a pebble from the ground, threw it into the brook. Half soliloquizing, he drew the

moral with a smile. “How smooth and clear was the surface of that stream; what an atom had been enough to disturb its tranquillity—how rapidly the circle spreads and ripples. Is it not, Don Ferdinand, some trifle, immaterial as this, that has been the original disturber of your peace; and how wide, how lamentably wide, is the disturbance that it has made between us.”

Velasquez appeared struck by the comparison. He stood silent and thoughtful; and Vaughan was encouraged to make one effort more. “Don Ferdinand, the Lady Leonora is worthy of all your confidence. In the sentiment which you have just now thrown out, you do that gentle lady, and, permit me to add, myself, much injustice. From my heart I feel for you; and so much do I esteem you both, that if it be necessary to se-

cure your mutual peace of mind, I will pledge myself never voluntarily to cross your path again.

The Spaniard's stern countenance softened, and he stood in the attitude of deep attention. Vaughan approached him, "Senor, I have memories and attachments in my own country that must make me insensible to all beauty here." "You love!" interrupted the Spaniard with a brightening face. "Most faithfully, most fervently!" was the reply; "but I am not selfish enough to wish the woman I love to share my uncertain fortunes."

"This looks like truth—this must be truth," said Velasquez, in deep emotion, "of what a weight have you relieved my mind! Answer me but one question. How long is it since your first acquaintance with Leonora? Was it begun in England?"—"No," was of course the

answer. "Pardon me, one question more: when did you next meet her?" said the Spaniard. "On the night after the surprise of the French; I conducted her to the cottage in which you lay, nor ever saw her more till the day on which she was introduced to me as your bride."

"Gallant, generous friend," said Velasquez, extending his hand, and his handsome features resuming their original expression, "I fully believe all; and, as the best proof I can give of my conviction, will return your confidence with mine. You shall see the bitter workings of my rash heart. Leonora's hand had been long promised to me, when the ruin of her brother's fortunes, and some personal danger to which she had been herself exposed, induced him to fly with her to England. I remonstrated against this step,—my heart mis-

gave me,—woman is fickle,—and man (*myself*, at least) prone to suspicion. I trembled lest this parting should prove the prelude to a lasting separation. I bade her remember Velasquez, and suffer no flattering stranger to drive me from her thoughts. She gave the promise; but promises may be broken. I was ill at ease; I counted the days of her absence, and dreamt what might be.

“When next we met,” continued Velasquez, “she was in deep affliction; her brother had fallen; she refused all consolation. Will you believe it? I was jealous even of her tears. I had witnessed the desolation of our house, sorrow and death by my side. But when Leonora returned, hope and joy appeared suddenly to bud and blossom

around me. I expected the same feelings from her. She wept so long, that I began to fear her grief had some other cause,—that her heart was in a stranger's land. I told her my fears; she repelled them loftily. I claimed her promise; she became my bride. She forbore the signs of woe in my presence; but she wept in secret."

"Lovely and noble woman," cried Vaughan, "she ought to have been rewarded by your undying confidence."

"My suspicions found an object," said Velasquez; "I will own, that from the hour we met in the villa of the Count de Alameda, they fell upon you. It was plain that she had an English friend till now never named in my hearing. It was plain that the meeting gave her pleasure. My unfortunate fancy filled up

the blank ; her past grief, her present joy, were traced to the same cause."

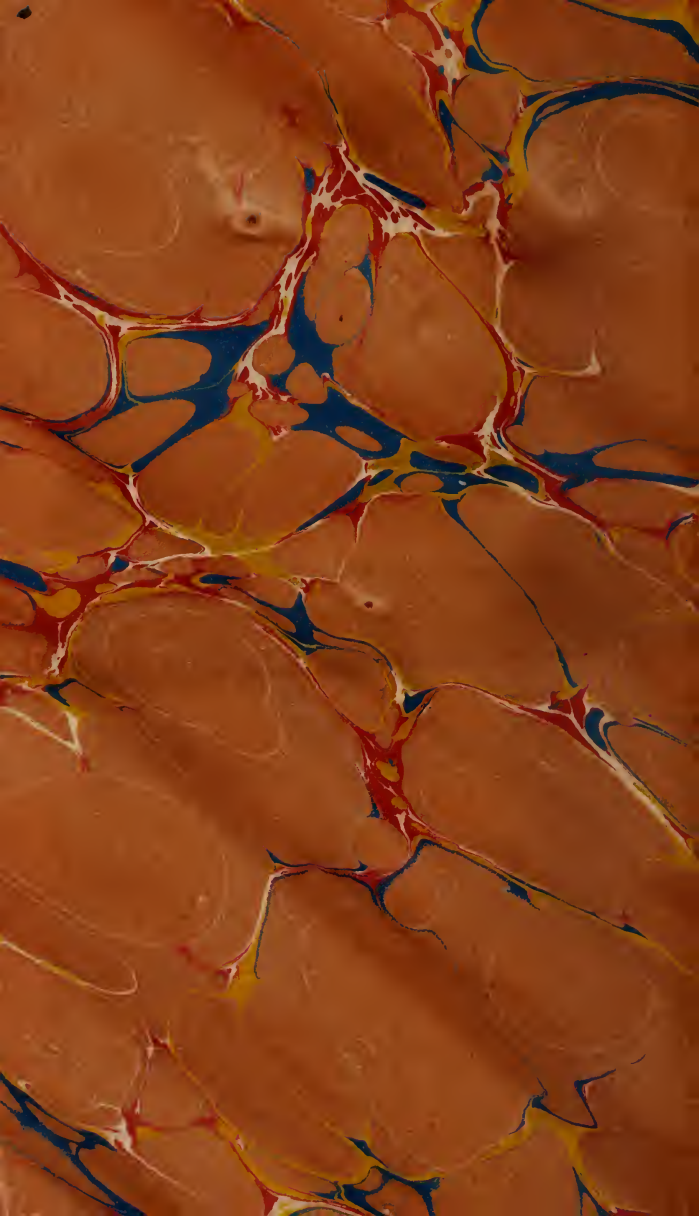
Vaughan was affected by the manly, yet melancholy, confidence of the Spaniard. " I am a man of few words, Senor," said he, as he offered his hand ; " but I can feel for the disturbance of an honourable mind. The Lady Leonora is beautiful, of eminent and most impressive beauty ; yet my mind is so much filled by the image of another, that if she were this hour without a tie on earth, I should not dream of interesting her feelings. Let us henceforth be friends."

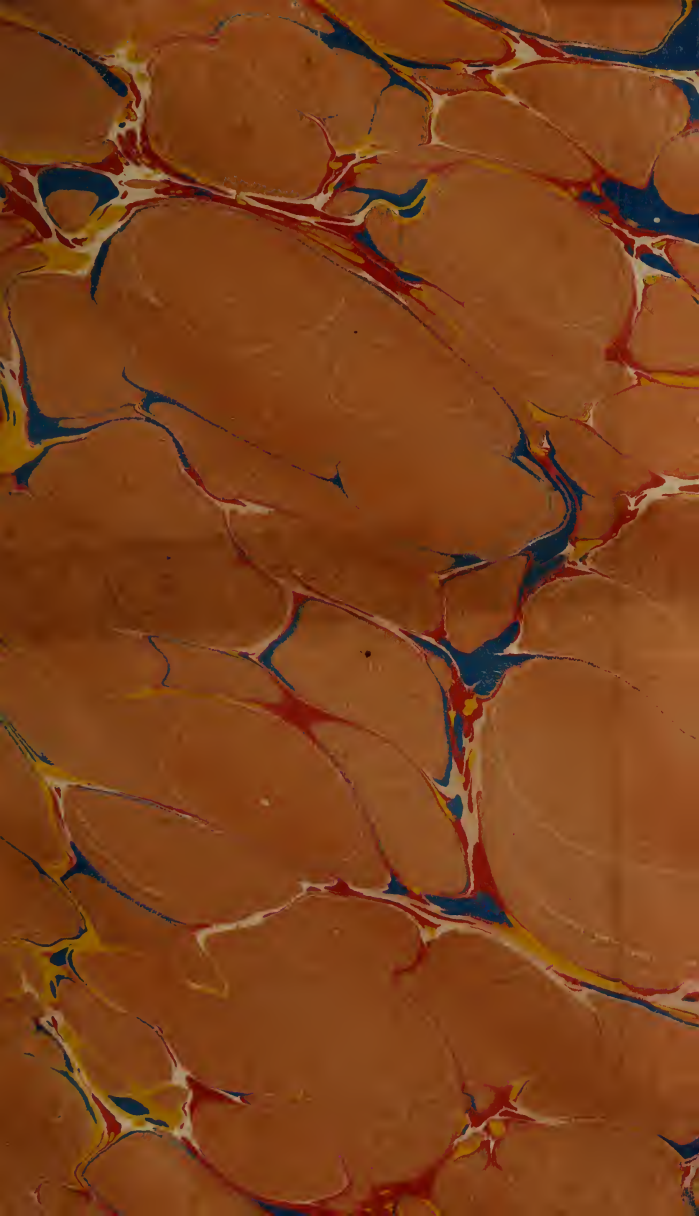
Velasquez grasped his hand. " Now and for ever," were the only words he uttered as he turned away. " Remember me to the Donna," said Vaughan, in a lighter tone, as he parted " As her

friend in life and death," said the noble Spaniard, in a voice broken with emotion; and, casting his eyes on Heaven, as if to register a vow, he plunged into the depths of the grove.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.







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